REPORT RESUMES

ED 018 874 EA 001 292

WILCOX COUNTY, ALABAMA--A STUDY OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND EDUCATIONAL BANKRUPTCY. REPORT OF AN INVESTIGATION.

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NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSN., WASHINGTON, D.C.

PUB DATE JUN 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.50 HC NOT AVAILABLE FROM EDRS. 113P.

DESCRIPTORS- *DEPRESSED AREAS (GEOGRAPHIC), *EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS, ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGEMENT, PER PUPIL EXPENDITURES, LEADERSHIP, *TENURE, BOARDS OF EDUCATION, STUDENT REACTION, *PUBLIC SCHOOLS, BUDGETS, STUDENT TEACHER RATIO, RACIAL DISTRIBUTION, TEACHER EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES, NEGRO TEACHERS, NEGRO STUDENTS, *EQUAL EDUCATION, SCHOOL CONDITIONS, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, ALABAMA,

THE REQUEST FOR THIS INVESTIGATION BY THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES RESULTED FROM THE FIRING OF NINE NEGRO TEACHERS IN WILCOX COUNTY. THE STUDY ITSELF IS MORE INCLUSIVE, INCORPORATING THE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF SEPARATE STUDIES IN POVERTY, SCHOOL FINANCE, UNFAIR DISMISSAL PROCEDURES AND POOR PERSONNEL POLICIES, INADEQUATE INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION AND MATERIALS, AND CHANGING POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORDERS. BACKGROUND INFORMATION IS PRESENTED IN THE FORM OF A CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS, STATISTICS OF THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, AND A PROFILE OF THE WILCOX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS. THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY ARE PRESENTED UNDER SIX HEADINGS--(1) EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURES IN WILCOX COUNTY, (2) THE TEACHER'S CHARGES, (3) THE STUDENT'S CHARGES, (4) SCHOOL FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN WILCOX COUNTY, (5) SCHOOL LEADERSHIP RESOURCES IN WILCOX COUNTY, AND (6) POTENTIALS FOR CHANGE. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOLVING THE EXISTING PROBLEMS ARE MADE BASED ON THESE FINDINGS. THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE AS STOCK NO. 165-05034-35M FROM THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, 1201 SIXTEENTH STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036. (HW)

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REPORT OF AN INVESTIGATION ★

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Wilcox County, Alabama

A STUDY OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND EDUCATIONAL BANKRUPTCY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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EA 001 292

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Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities

JUNE 1967

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In 1941 the National Education Association organized the National Commission for the Defense of Democracy Through Education to help develop understanding of the important relationship between a better education for all our people and the maintenance of our American democracy and way of life and to bring to the teaching profession greater strength and unity in working for increased democracy in and through education. In 1961 the Representative Assembly merged the Commission with the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom to form the Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities. The functions of this Commission are—

1. To defend members of the teaching profession, schools, and the cause of education against unjust attacks; to investigate controversies involving teachers and schools justly, fearlessly, and in the public interest.
2. To encourage the development and use of personnel policies that attract and hold competent professional personnel and prevent unnecessary difficulties.
3. To aid in improvement and extension of state tenure legislation.
4. To promote the civil and human rights of members of the teaching profession and foster conditions of academic freedom under which teachers may safely teach the truth without fear or favor.
5. To gather information about the various individuals and groups who criticize or oppose education and make résumés of their activities.
6. To investigate cases of alleged unethical conduct by members of the teaching profession when requested to do so by the Committee on Professional Ethics.
7. To investigate charges and report to the NEA Executive Committee the name of any member who violates the requirements of Article I of the NEA Bylaws.
8. To issue reports and engage in such other activities as are appropriate to the development of better understanding by the profession and the public of the areas of concern which are the responsibility of the Commission.

June 1967
National Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities
of the
National Education Association of the United States
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

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for
Wilcox County School Investigation

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FOREWORD

This is one of the most complicated studies that the Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities has been called upon to undertake. It incorporates the findings and conclusions of five separate studies: one dealing with poverty, one dealing with school finance, one with unfair dismissal procedures and poor personnel policies, one with inadequate instructional supervision and materials, and one with a changing political and social order. All together, these comprise the maze of problems that surround, impinge upon, and involve public education in Wilcox County.

The problems of Wilcox County, as delineated in this report, are also the problems of Alabama; they are symptomatic of the nation's most crucial domestic problems and challenges.

This report, while addressing itself to the situation in Wilcox County, is really an appeal to the people of Alabama and of the United States to take a new look at our tradition of heavy dependence on the property tax to supply the local share of public school support.

The Commission hopes that the solutions proposed at the end of this report will help to bring relief to the teachers and students who requested the NEA study and that they will help the citizens of Wilcox as they move to shape a more productive future for themselves and for their communities. Moreover, the Commission hopes that this report has a message for the hundreds of other counties with similar problems.

The Commission is indeed appreciative of the time given by the members of the NEA Special Committee, most of whom came from the region, and to Dr. Floyd Hunter, who acted as consultant to the Committee and staff, and whose paper appears as the Appendix to this report.

Cornelius E. Gisriel, *Chairman*
Commission on Professional
Rights and Responsibilities,
National Education Association

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Introduction

"I cannot say where the trouble began because it has always been with us." This was the opening statement of a member of the Wilcox County Teachers Association who met with a Special Committee of the National Education Association Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities (NEA PR&R Commission) in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 10, 1966.

The specifics of the trouble that had "always been with" Negro teachers and students of Wilcox County were outlined in a resolution adopted March 24, 1966, by the Wilcox County Teachers Association, its Committee on Professional Rights and Responsibilities, and its Principals Association:

1. There is a lack of adequate instructional materials.
2. There are some classrooms with 50-80 pupils per teacher.
3. There are dilapidated and overcrowded transportation facilities.
4. There are insufficient toilet facilities.
5. There are no libraries in some schools and an inadequate supply of books in others.
6. Uncertainty of teacher employment is forever prevalent.
7. There is a proposed law to abolish teacher tenure in Wilcox County.
8. There is an absence of written personnel policies.
9. The compulsory school attendance law is not enforced.
10. All school facilities, students, and teachers are segregated.

In their resolution of March 24, 1966, the teacher groups appealed to both their state and national associations to assist them in improving the conditions of public education in Wilcox County. They requested the NEA PR&R Commission to investigate the problems cited above.

On April 6, 1966, the executive secretary of the Alabama State Teachers Association (ASTA) wrote to the NEA PR&R Commission, enclosing the resolution of the Wilcox County teacher groups and urging that a full-scale investigation of school conditions in Wilcox County be conducted.

Circumstances Prompting Investigation Request

TEACHER DISMISSALS. The initial issue prompting this investigation request had to do with the firing of nine Negro teachers in Wilcox County in 1965. The reason for their dismissal, according to the Board of Education and superintendent, was the loss of teacher unit allocations from the State Minimum Program Fund due to lowered pupil attendance during the previous school year.

Most of the dismissed teachers held Class B teaching certificates, based on the B.A. degree; several had Class A certificates, based on the M.A. degree. Most of them had served the county schools for a number of years; some had as much as 20 years' tenure.

The Alabama Teacher Tenure Law grants tenure rights to any teacher who has had three years of continuing service with a school district and has been re-employed for a fourth year. The Tenure Law provides that notice must be given a tenure teacher by the last day of the school term if he is not to be employed for the ensuing year.

[illegible] teachers who were dismissed from the Wilcox County Schools in 1[illegible] were not notified of their dismissal until late in August; in some instances the notices were not received until the 1965-66 term had opened and the teachers were in school registering students. Moreover, the County Board of Education retained the services of some teachers who had neither the tenure nor the full professional certification of the teachers who were dismissed. After the dismissals, the Board employed other teachers, some of whom had only provisional certification.

BOARD REFUSAL TO OBEY TENURE COMMISSION RULING. Four of the dismissed teachers decided to challenge the Board's action. After failing to obtain reinstatement following local Board hearings on their contract cancellation, the teachers, with the assistance of their state association, ASTA, appealed to the Alabama Teacher Tenure Commission. In October 1965, the Tenure Commission ruled illegal the dismissal of one of the teachers, stating that the "purported" hearing given him had not been a legal hearing; in the cases of the other teachers, the Tenure Commission ruled that the Wilcox County Board of Education was without sufficient evidence to support their dismissal. The Tenure Commission ordered reinstatement of the four teachers. But the Alabama Teacher Tenure Commission, although charged by act of the state legislature with the responsibility of implementing the state teacher tenure law, is without enforcement powers.

The Wilcox County Board of Education refused to reinstate the teachers as the Tenure Commission had ordered. A School Board representative was quoted in the press as saying, "If the Tenure Commission will send us the money, we'd be glad to hire all nine of them back." [1]

A THREAT AND A PROPOSAL. In early 1966, two further events foretold an even greater forfeiture of the professional security of Wilcox County teachers:

February 1966: The superintendent of Wilcox County Public Schools wrote a letter to the Mobile, Alabama, *Press-Register,* stating that the

Board of Education might have to dismiss as many as 24 additional Negro teachers.

March 1966: The Wilcox County Board of Education adopted a resolution proposing the abolishment of the Alabama Teacher Tenure Law in Wilcox County. The proposal was later to be introduced by the Wilcox County delegate to the Alabama House of Representatives and adopted by the legislature.

Student Protest: "The Truth About Lower Peach Tree High School"

The Wilcox County Teachers Association was not alone in seeking improved educational conditions in the county. In October 1965—even before the teachers' investigation request—the students of Lower Peach Tree High School, a Negro school, appealed to the ASTA, the NEA, the U.S. Office of Education, and civil rights groups to help them in their protest against inequality of educational opportunity and the denial of voting rights to adult Negro citizens of Wilcox County.*

This is what the students reported in a paper entitled "The Truth About Lower Peach Tree High School":

> Some years ago our parents were advised to buy some land upon which would be built a high school. Our parents gave fish frys and Saturday night jukes and bought the land and deeded it to the state and county. A school building was built for us which was not as good as some people's barn. The condition of the building is bad:
>
> 1. The floor is of cement, hard to keep clean.
> 2. The walls are unpainted.
> 3. No science room.
> 4. No gym.
> 5. No library.
> 6. No suitable toilet facilities.
> 7. No place to wash hands for lunch.
> 8. No decent drinking fountain.
> 9. Two of our classrooms have no heater at all.
> 10. The grounds need landscaping; it looks more like a sawmill.
> 11. We have poor bus service; they are always broken down.
> 12. Classrooms are overcrowded.
> 13. We have to make our own fires and sweep our own floors daily.
> 14. Poor classroom facilities.
>
> Come and see for yourselves!
>
> In view of all these conditions, many of our white friends expect us to be satisfied. If you are really our friend, then help us.
>
> We, as students, are saying that unless we do something about this condition now, our children will be going to school under the same

---

* See p. 15, "Background." In March 1965, the first Negro citizens since Reconstruction days succeeded in getting on the voting register of Wilcox County.

conditions. Therefore, you can see why we are protesting and why we want our parents to become *registered voters*.

Preliminary Inquiry

On May 23 and 24, 1966, an associate secretary of the NEA Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities, together with the executive secretary of ASTA, conducted a preliminary inquiry into the charges that had been made by Wilcox County educators. Earlier in the year, he had visited Lower Peach Tree High School.

During the preliminary inquiry in May 1966, the NEA and ASTA staff members met with the Wilcox County PR&R Committee and with other Wilcox County Teachers Association members. They also met with the superintendent of schools to inform him of the teachers' complaints and to seek his and the School Board's cooperation in studying the problems reported.

At the conclusion of the preliminary inquiry, the associate secretary assigned to the case recommended that the NEA PR&R Commission authorize a full-scale investigation of the conditions of public education in Wilcox County, Alabama. This recommendation was supported by an affirmative resolution by the NEA PR&R Commission's Committee on Civil and Human Rights of Educators.

Investigation Authorized

In accordance with the staff recommendation and the Committee resolution, the NEA PR&R Commission at its June 1966 meeting authorized the appointment of a special committee of educators to conduct the Wilcox County study.

PR&R Efforts To Meet with School Officials and Arrange for School Visitations in Wilcox County

On November 18, 1966, after the Special Committee members had been appointed, the executive secretary of the NEA PR&R Commission wrote to the chairman of the Board of Education and the superintendent of the Wilcox County Schools, informing them of the pending school study, requesting an interview with school officials, and asking permission for the Special Committee to visit schools in the county. No response to this letter was received.

On December 7, 1966, the PR&R associate secretary designated as coordinator of the study and the PR&R Commission's associate legal counsel telephoned the Wilcox County superintendent, reminding him that plans had been made for the Special Committee to be in Montgomery and Wilcox County December 9 through 12 and again requesting an interview with the superintendent and the Board and other interested citizens who would support his point of view. At this time, the PR&R staff members renewed their request for permission to visit Wilcox County schools. The superintendent expressed objection to certain language contained in the letter of November 18, stating that it gave the impression that the PR&R staff members had already formed conclusions about conditions in the county. He pointed out that the letter spoke of investigating teacher unrest. He denied that there was any unrest. The superintendent stated, however, that if a second communication were sent, omitting the language to which he took exception, cooperation with the Special Committee would be possible. The staff agreed to change the letter to read "alleged unrest." It also agreed to withdraw its previous request for an interview on December 11 (a Sunday).

Having reached what appeared to them to be a firm agreement with the Wilcox County superintendent of schools, PR&R staff members completed plans for the study to be conducted December 9 through 12, 1966. A telegram containing the revision was dispatched immediately.

TELEGRAMS. Quoted below are the telegrams exchanged by the executive secretary of the NEA PR&R Commission and the superintendent of Wilcox County Public Schools on December 7 and 9, 1966:

> December 7, 1966
> To Superintendent of Schools, Wilcox County
>
> This is to clarify my letter of November 18 concerning the special NEA Study Committee for Wilcox County.
>
> The purpose of the committee is to determine whether or not the allegations made by the Wilcox County Teachers Association concerning conditions are true.
>
> It seems to me that the Committee will be at a loss to reach unbiased conclusions without carefully examining all sides of the issues.
>
> In the light of your conversation with [the associate secretary] and [the associate legal counsel] earlier today, I hope that you will consent to meet the Committee in your office some time on December 12.
>
> We hope that the Committee will also have an opportunity to visit the schools and if possible talk with members of the Board of Education and other elected officials of the county whom you feel it wise to interview.
>
> May we hear from you before Friday of this week?
>
> Executive Secretary, PR&R

> December 9, 1966
> To Executive Secretary, PR&R
>
> Reference your telegram Dec. 7, 1966 . . . I am informed that the Wilcox County Teachers Association has made no allegation concern-

ing unrest among teachers in Wilcox County to your organization. Since your suggested dates are so close to Christmas, we suggest that we defer further communication until after the holidays. We hope at this time it will be possible for you to have an opportunity to visit our schools with the members of the Board of Education and me.

Superintendent of Schools, Wilcox County

December 9, 1966
To Superintendent of Schools, Wilcox County

Your gracious offer to meet with the NEA Study Committee came after Committee members were already in transit to begin the study. Consequently, this visit could not be postponed.

Committee chairman will contact you tonight or tomorrow. Expense of additional meeting of Committee may preclude later visit. We hope you will arrange to meet with Committee Monday.

Executive Secretary, PR&R

First Phase of Study: December 9 through 12, 1966

The NEA Special Committee convened in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 9, 1966, to conduct the Wilcox County school study.

On December 9 and 10, representatives of the Wilcox County Teachers Association, of its PR&R Committee, and of the Negro Principals Association, and lay citizens and students traveled from Wilcox County to Montgomery for interviews with the Special Committee. Meetings were held also with the state superintendent of public instruction and with representatives of the Alabama Teacher Tenure Commission. These meetings were held in Montgomery, because the Committee was unable to locate meeting facilities in Wilcox County.

During this first phase of the Wilcox County school study, a background paper was developed at the request of the NEA Special Committee by Floyd Hunter, president, Social Science Research and Development Corporation, El Cerrito, California. Prior to the Special Committee's arrival, Dr. Hunter visited Wilcox County, interviewing residents and conducting research into the socioeconomic characteristics of the county, its people, and its power structures. The Appendix of this report is Dr. Hunter's statement of the sociological and economic factors that are relevant to the problems under study by the NEA Special Committee.

COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL OFFICIALS. When telephoned by Special Committee members on December 10, the Wilcox County superintendent declined to meet with the Committee or to permit members to visit Wilcox County schools during this visit. However, he and the School Board chairman, in separate telephone conversations with Special Committee members, indicated that if the chairman and possibly other members of the Committee would return in January, every courtesy would be extended the group, including a personal guided tour of the schools.

VISIT TO WILCOX COUNTY. On December 12, the NEA Special Committee visited Wilcox County to observe firsthand the conditions that had been reported by the teachers. Although barred from school visits, Committee members were able to see the school building exteriors and grounds and to observe also the housing conditions to which many Wilcox County citizens are subjected. Their observations in the county and the conversations some of them had with residents during the day served to reinforce the impressions that earlier interviews had given them concerning the severe impoverishment of schools and homes in Wilcox County.

Second Phase of Investigation: March 2 through 4, 1967

A series of communications between NEA Special Committee members and staff and Wilcox County school officials culminated in an agreement that the superintendent and School Board chairman would meet with the co-chairmen of the Special Committee on March 3 and 4, 1967, and would escort them on a tour of the schools.

Accordingly, arrangements were made for a Subcommittee, consisting of the co-chairmen and two other Special Committee members, assisted by the coordinator of the study and the technical writer, to return to Montgomery and Wilcox County to continue the study from March 2 through 4.

During this second visit, while the co-chairmen met with Wilcox County school officials and visited schools, other members of the Subcommittee conducted interviews with the following individuals and groups: officials of the State Department of Public Instruction, a college faculty member whose former professional experience had given him extensive knowledge of educational conditions in Wilcox County, field workers of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, antipoverty workers in the County, and some of the Negro students who had transferred in September 1966 to a formerly all-white school in Wilcox County. Also, in Selma, Alabama, Subcommittee members interviewed an official of the National Missions Department of the United Presbyterian Church, which has operated schools in Wilcox County since 1886 and which until the 1930's provided the only high school education available to the Negro youth of the county.

Purposes and Scope of NEA Report

The findings of the NEA Special Committee in Wilcox County have substantiated each specific allegation made by the educators who joined in the investigation request and the students of Lower Peach Tree High School.

The purposes of the NEA Special Committee in issuing this report and its recommendations are—

1. To examine the conditions and attitudes that are basic to the impoverishment, not only of the Negro schools of Wilcox County, but of all schools, and that make, not only the Negro population of Wilcox County, but most of the white population as well, subject to economic and political exploitation
2. To direct official and public attention to resources at the local, state, and most particularly, the federal level of government that could be utilized to build a productive public education system in Wilcox County and to show what this could mean in terms of economic and educational growth for all of its citizens
3. To direct national attention to the serious problems faced by the poorer school districts of America in providing schools in which all children have equal opportunity for quality education
4. To underscore the failings of the doctrine of "separate but equal"
5. To show what happens when boards of education do not reflect the will or the interests of major segments of the community
6. To suggest areas of possible solution to the problems with which this investigation has been concerned.

BACKGROUND
A Chronology

This report is concerned specifically with charges regarding conditions of teaching and learning in Wilcox County Public Schools, including the absence of any reasonable degree of professional security for educators and the inequality of educational opportunity for students. In order to evaluate these charges, however, and to see the problems they reflect in clear perspective, it is important to be aware, not only of the immediate events and circumstances that prompted the investigation request, but also of the more extensive chain of events and the more complex web of circumstances that brought the Civil Rights Movement to Alabama and to Wilcox County in 1965.

A logical starting point for the outline of these events and circumstances is the year 1964, when a national civil rights act was passed providing that no persons shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be subject to discrimination under any program of activity receiving federal financial assistance. The law gave hope to many that dual school systems throughout the nation would be abolished. It required the filing of assurances of compliance and at least the beginning toward implementation of plans by local school districts (unless already desegregating under court order) before the districts could qualify for federal financial assistance.

Later in 1964, with passage of the Economic Opportunity Act, the Eighty-Eighth Congress appropriated more than $785 million to be used in a wide variety of programs designed to attack all aspects of poverty within the United States.

The Groundwork Was Laid

With these two acts, a legal and financial groundwork was laid for ending the extremes of racial and economic discrimination, educational inequality, and poverty in the United States. But in many areas of the nation, *political* inequality was such that citizens suffering from poverty and discrimination were powerless to act, even to the extent of voting for public officials who would be willing to comply with the requirements of the new federal laws.

In 1961, the United States Commission on Civil Rights reported:

> In some 100 counties in eight Southern states there is reason to believe that Negro citizens are prevented—by outright discrimination or by fear of physical violence or economic reprisal from exercising the right to vote.

There are many counties in the South where a substantial population not only has no voice in government, but suffers extensive deprivation, legal, economic, educational, and social.[2]

Alabama contained two "cipher" counties—counties containing no Negro registered voters—in 1965. These were Wilcox (population 78 percent Negro) and adjoining Lowndes Counties (population 80.7 percent Negro). In a third neighboring Black Belt county, Dallas, Negroes comprised 57.7 percent of the total population and 1.4 percent of the registered voters.*

The Beginning of Change

The year 1965 marked a significant beginning to political and educational changes that have persisted against adamant official resistance in Wilcox County and in Alabama.

The events that led to this school study were a part of the processes of change. The repeal of teacher tenure in Wilcox County was among the actions by which local and state officials have signified their response to the new pressure of federal laws and the efforts of civil rights groups to seek equality of opportunity and equal protection of the law.

The protests of Negro students and teachers in Wilcox County gave evidence of the hopes that have been kindled by these laws that were so full of promise . . . and of the frustrations that have been deepened by the unyielding oppressiveness of a power structure determined to defy change.

The chronology that follows shows more clearly the patterns of change and resistance that have affected or have been effected by the teachers, students, and school officials of Wilcox County as they relate to the focal issues of this report.

1965

January, February:	Desegregation and voter registration campaign took place in Selma, Alabama, Dallas County Seat, and in neighboring counties, including Wilcox.
March:	Wilcox County citizens joined in Selma-to-Montgomery march. Students boycotted Wilcox County Negro high schools, initiating, and joining adults in, months-long demonstrations for voting rights and equal educational opportunity.

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* The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported in 1961 that the denial of Negro suffrage had "recently occurred in at least 10 of Alabama's 67 counties."

1965 For the first time, Negro citizens succeeded in getting on the voting register of Wilcox County.

April: Alabama legislature appropriated funds for 10 percent teacher salary increase, but disqualified for this increase any teacher taking part in, or accused of aiding, demonstrations.

U.S. Congress adopted Elementary and Secondary Education Act, under which federal funds would be appropriated to support educational programs and improvements in poverty-impacted school districts.

U.S. Office of Education issued Statement of Policies for school desegregation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (commonly referred to as "guidelines").

May: Governor of Alabama called on Alabama boards of education not to comply with further Washington school desegregation orders until the courts had ruled on a suit filed by the Bessemer (Ala.) Board of Education, challenging the constitutionality of the federal government's authority to withhold funds from school districts that refused to comply with the Civil Rights Act.

Alabama Board of Education adopted resolution prohibiting the use of state funds to pay teachers and/or principals for any day on which their classrooms and/or schools had less than 63 percent pupil attendance. The sponsor of the resolution was the State Board member from Camden, Wilcox County, where students had boycotted the Negro high school, Camden Academy.

Spring and Summer: Wilcox County Negro students applied for admission to formerly all white schools and were refused. White students from neighboring Dallas County applied for admission to Wilcox County white schools after a Dallas County school was closed and were accepted.

Among the Negro parents of Wilcox County who requested transfer of their children to white schools in 1965 was a 16-year tenure teacher at Lower Peach Tree High School (boycotted by its students earlier in the year). This teacher was active in the voter registration campaign of 1965, driving citizens to the courthouse to register to vote and lodging civil rights workers in his home.

1965 Civil rights workers, including several white ministerial students, were housed in a dormitory of Camden Academy, a Negro school owned by the National Board of Missions of the United Presbyterian Church and operated by the Wilcox County Board of Education. Civil rights meetings were held in Camden Academy Chapel.

August: Wilcox County Board of Education initiated condemnation action to take over Camden Academy property from United Presbyterian Church.

1965 Voting Rights Law was adopted by Congress.

August 10: The Lower Peach Tree High School teacher who (along with his wife, also a Wilcox County tenure teacher) had requested transfer of his sons to a white school in the county received notice from the Board of Education that it would meet August 31 to consider cancellation of his contract due to reduction in teacher unit allocations from the state. He appeared at the Board meeting to contest the dismissal. Despite his tenure, his record of service, and a petition from 100 school patrons requesting that he be retained, the meeting culminated in cancellation of his contract.

Late August, early September: Eight additional Negro teachers were dismissed by the Wilcox County Board of Education.

Alabama legislature appropriated $3.75 million for tuition grants to students to attend private schools in preference to attending desegregating public schools.

September: U.S. Congress appropriated funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Based on the incidence of poverty, the Wilcox County allocation was $611,083, none of which the county used because of its refusal to desegregate schools.

October: Alabama Tenure Commission ruled that the Wilcox County School Board's dismissal of the Lower Peach Tree High School teacher was illegal, that the "purported" dismissal hearing on August 31 had not been a legal hearing, and that the cancellation of the teacher's contract was "null and void." The Tenure Commission ruled that the Board was without sufficient evidence to dismiss the other Wilcox County teach-

1965

ers who had appealed to the Commission and ordered that all of the teachers should be reinstated.*

Wilcox County Board of Education refused to reinstate the dismissed teachers as ordered by the Tenure Commission.

November: Department of Justice filed suit, under Civil Rights Act of 1964, seeking desegregation of Wilcox County schools.

1966

January: Wilcox County superintendent of schools wrote to the *Mobile Press-Register,* stating that the Board of Education might have to dismiss as many as 24 additional Negro teachers.

March: U.S. Office of Education issued revised Policy Statements (Guidelines) to comply with 1964 Civil Rights Act, requiring desegregation of faculty as well as students for 1966-67.

Governor of Alabama, addressing the annual convention of the Alabama Education Association, denounced the new Guidelines as unlawful.

Wilcox County Board of Education adopted a resolution for submission to the state legislature proposing the abolishment of the Alabama Teacher Tenure Law in Wilcox County.

Superintendent of Wilcox County schools wrote to parents and guardians of students, informing them of the desegregation suit, indicating that present schools were best for all concerned, and urging that they continue to send their children to the same schools in which the students were then enrolled.

Wilcox County Teachers Association requested NEA investigation.

May: Alabama Democratic primary election was held; Negro citizens of Wilcox County voted for the first time.

Alabama congressional delegation urged Alabama school officials to continue to resist the new federal school desegration guidelines and requested districts that had already submitted compliance agreements to withdraw them.

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* Only four of the nine dismissed Wilcox County teachers took their case to the Alabama Teacher Tenure Commission. Two of the teachers left the state; one was not on tenure; another chose to retire rather than contest dismissal; and a fifth did not seek the assistance of either ASTA or the Tenure Commission.

1966	Alabama State Board of Education unanimously adopted a resolution urging local school boards not to comply with desegregation guidelines. NEA preliminary inquiry was conducted in Wilcox County.
June:	U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity approved an antipoverty grant for Wilcox County.
July:	Members of Alabama's Congressional delegation effected suspension of the OEO antipoverty grant to Wilcox County pending investigation of a charge made by the governor that the grant had been made to militant civil rights groups.
August:	Alabama legislature repealed the State Teacher Tenure Law in Wilcox County, in accordance with the proposal made by Wilcox County delegates. A three-judge federal appeals court ordered Wilcox County school authorities to begin desegregation of schools in 1966-67, thus overturning a district court denial of an injunction ordering an end to the dual school system in the county. (The lower court had decided there was not enough time for desegregation to be accomplished properly by 1966-67.) Alabama legislature adopted an administration-sponsored bill declaring all school board desegregation agreements with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) null, void, and prohibited. Sixty-six Negro students applied for admission to formerly all-white schools in Wilcox County.
September:	Under court order—and thereby becoming eligible for federal funds—the Wilcox County Board of Education approved admittance of 21 Negro students to formerly all-white schools.
November:	The wife of the former governor of Alabama was elected his successor, polling more than 63 percent of the vote. OEO refunded the antipoverty grant to the Wilcox County Anti-Poverty League, after having suspended funds because of the former governor's charge. Two 3-judge federal court panels began hearing testimony on consolidated suits (a) attacking Alabama's anti-Guidelines legislation; (b) seeking an injunction to desegregate all Ala-

1966 bama schools in a single order (Lee *versus* Macon); (c) in a counter suit attacking validity of all HEW Guidelines as implemented by the U.S. Office of Education; and (d) asking for an order invalidating Alabama's private school tuition plan.

December: Letter from a staff member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was sent to the Department of Justice, protesting physical harassment and abuse of Negro students transferred in September to Wilcox County High School.

NEA Special Committee conducted first phase of Wilcox County study.

1967

January: U.S. District Court (Mobile) ordered the Wilcox County Board of Education to admit additional Negro pupils to traditionally white schools. The order referred specifically to the 66 Negro students who had applied for transfer to white schools in August and said that any of these students who were denied transfers and still wished to transfer should be permitted to do so. The Judge noted that only 11 Negroes were currently enrolled in white schools in the county although 21 were approved by the School Board in September 1966.

The federal court panels, in a split decision, upheld the legality of the controversial HEW Guidelines as a standard for court-ordered desegregation in the circuit.

Three Alabama boards of education joined with four from Louisiana to ask the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals for a special full court review of the federal court panels' decision upholding the HEW Guidelines.

March: U.S. District Court (Montgomery, Ala.) ordered Alabama officials and the state department of education to take affirmative action to desegregate schools in all 99 districts of the state not already under federal court orders to do so.

Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the earlier (January) 2-1 appellate decision that, in effect, upheld the legality of the HEW Guidelines as a standard for court-ordered desegregation. The full court ruling ordered full desegregation of

1967 public schools from kindergarten through high school, beginning in September 1967, in all six states of the circuit (Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Texas).

The governor of Alabama, addressing a joint session of the legislature, assailed both rulings; asked the lawmakers to issue "as an exercise of the police power of this state, a cease and desist order, to be delivered upon the three federal judges (of the district court)"; called for an appeal to the Supreme Court; and requested possible legislative action which would invest in the Office of the Governor and the legislature all the duties of the state superintendent and the state board "including, but not limited to, supervisory control with regard to our various local boards of education." The governor raised the question—without elaboration—of "whether additional state troopers may be required in order that the children of our state be protected."[8]

The U.S. Supreme Court was asked to enjoin the Fifth Circuit from enforcing its decision.

April: U.S. Supreme Court refused to grant the stay injunction. The cases may still be appealed; the 90-day time limit for appeal was still pending as this report went to press.

The Statistics of Poverty

The emergence of the Civil Rights Movement in Wilcox County has implications that go beyond the racial struggle. Negro citizens seek equal protection under the law and equal opportunity in schools, jobs, and at the ballot box. If they achieve these goals, they may also succeed in rescuing the county from the political, educational, and economic stagnation with which it has long been afflicted. Statistics show that the forces of so-called conservatism have conserved the status quo in Wilcox—and little else. Through wastage of human and material resource, this rural Black Belt county remains third among the poorest counties in Alabama and twentieth among the most destitute counties of the nation.

The way of life that still prevails in Wilcox was founded on a cotton plantation and sharecropper economy that began to break down with the onslaught of the boll weevil shortly after the first World War. Land erosion; the economic depression of the 30's; and the introduction, with federal financial and technical assistance, of modern farming methods, including mechanization and diversification of agriculture, have almost completed the demise of cotton as a major factor in the economy of the county. In its place, there has been an increasing emphasis on cattle raising and, more recently, on timber growing and the establishment of wood-pulp industries. There have also been a conversion from sharecropper to wage-hand farming and a gradual, continuing squeeze-out of the landless Negro tenant, as machines have taken over the work of hand labor on the plantations and as croplands have been cleared for pasture and timber growing.

The following data show the bleak consequences of the persisting plantation way of life that has remained unmoved by the social and economic changes of the "outside" world—outside Wilcox County and, to an unfortunate degree, outside Alabama as well.

INCOME. The average per capita income in Wilcox County in 1960 was $543; the national per capita income was $2,200. A total of 90 percent of the Negro families and 32 percent of the white families of Wilcox County had incomes of less than $3,000 in 1960. About 48 percent of Negro families and 9 percent of white families had incomes of less than $1,000. It is estimated that the Negro population of Wilcox County has an average per capita income of $350.[4]

EMPLOYMENT. Only 27 percent, or 3,860, of the Negro citizens of Wilcox County were in the labor force in 1960, compared with 37 percent (1,066) of the whites. Five percent of adult males were listed as unemployed in 1960. Local estimates were that 1,500 or more of the labor force were underemployed in the mid-sixties.[5]

A 1966 research study of Wilcox County by Orion Ulrey of Michigan State University states:

> Negroes have not been employed in the courthouse nor in the post offices of the county. . . . Negroes have not had any white collar jobs in the county except as preachers and as teachers in the Negro schools. . . . The reported pay for farm labor was only $15-$25 a week, or one-fourth the wages in many northern states. The composite farm wage rate in Alabama was $.58 an hour on July 1, 1966, as reported by the USDA-State Crop Reporting Board. Only Mississippi had lower farm wages. The average for the United States was $1.01 an hour.
>
> The Negroes have the lowest paying jobs in the county: tenants and share croppers, unskilled labor, and house services.[6]

AGRICULTURE. The farm population decreased from 75 percent to 40 percent of the total population of Wilcox County between 1950 and 1960. The number of farms was reduced from 3,417 to 1,759. The number of Negro farm operators (predominantly sharecroppers) decreased 52 percent —from 2,699 to 1,284.

Although 67 percent of the 900 square miles of Wilcox County was in farms in 1960, cropland constituted only 14 percent of the total farming area. The remainder was pasture or farm woodland. More than half of the total land area in the county is in timber or timber-pasture.

In 1960, 49 percent of the farms in Wilcox County were classified as commercial and 51 percent as part-time, compared with 76 percent and 24 percent respectively in 1950. Sixty-nine percent of the commercial farms were classified as "low-income" in 1960, having gross sales of less than $2,500.

The average size of farms rose from 121 acres in 1950 to 220 in 1960, with a few large farms of up to several thousand acres accounting for the relatively high average size.[7]

HOUSING. There were 5,819 dwelling units in Wilcox County in 1960; fewer than 20 percent of these were classified by U.S. Census takers as "sound with all plumbing facilities." For the state as a whole, 53.5 percent of all dwelling units were so classified.[8]

An estimated 10 percent or fewer of the Negroes of Wilcox County own their own homes.[9] The Negro tenant houses observed by the NEA Special Committee were unpainted wooden shacks, most of them in advanced stages of decrepitude, many without window panes and with worn or missing slats caulked with newspapers and rags.

> One notices striking differences between the homes and farmsteads of the Negro farm owners and tenants. The owners usually have sizable gardens, livestock, and houses in fair to good condition. The owners frequently have electricity, refrigerators, and freezers. The homes of

> the tenants contain but few if any of the modern comforts and necessities.

. . . .

> The landlords, who own houses used by families not needed on the farms, apparently have not repaired such houses. The tenants are without funds. There seems to be a shortage of cooperation between the tenants and landlords to maintain rural homes.[10]

HEALTH SERVICES. Health services for Negroes in Wilcox County are virtually nonexistent. Two of the five doctors in the county are more than 80 years old; of the remaining three, only two reportedly accept Negro patients. A county health doctor and one nurse serve Wilcox County and adjoining Lowndes County. There are no dentists for Negroes in Wilcox. In reporting the findings of his research in Wilcox County, Dr. Ulrey of Michigan State University stated:

> Over 77 percent of infants are delivered by midwives. Negroes must travel around 50 miles for medical emergencies. One dental clinic of two weeks is provided each year for school children. There are no health examinations at any level in Negro schools, no programs of psychological guidance, and no individual or family counseling.
>
> There has not been any program to encourage and provide the information and supplies for family planning and birth control in Wilcox County.[11]

VOTING. The Negro has been without power to disturb the status quo in Wilcox County because he has been without political voice. However, the intensive voter registration campaign of 1965, which had its focal point in Selma, Alabama, involved many Wilcox County citizens, contributed to passage of the Voting Rights Act of that year, and resulted in opening the ballot box to Negro citizens of Wilcox County. By July 1966 (despite the intimidation and physical abuse that had faced them in their voter registration efforts), 3,900 Negro citizens had succeeded in getting on the voting register of Wilcox County.*

Although the Negro electorate exceeded the white electorate in numbers, and although there were Negro candidates for county office in the Democratic primary election of 1966, no Negro candidates were successful.

A Negro educator said to the NEA Special Committee: "When people have decided your political destiny for you for a number of years, it is very difficult to know what to do with a vote. There is much illiteracy among the Negro population. We are going to have to educate the adult Negro to the power of the ballot so that he can utilize it."

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* According to a 1961 report of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Wilcox County contained 2,950 white registered voters. The county then had a white voter registration of 112.4 percent and no Negro registered voters.

Wilcox County educators also expressed the opinion that the outcome of the 1966 primary was affected by the presence of white advisers who assisted some voters in casting their ballots. Although a paper sticker is placed over the number on the paper ballots used in Wilcox County (and elsewhere in Alabama), persons interviewed by Special Committee members said that voters do not believe they have a secret ballot. Because each voter is required to sign a sheet at the polling place with a number on it that corresponds to the number on his ballot, the feeling is widespread that voting officials will remove the sticker from the ballot and check it against the signatures.

EDUCATION. Wilcox County schools have achieved little in educating the children of either race. In 1960, the median number of school years completed by Wilcox County citizens 25 years old and over was 7.0; for the state as a whole the median grade level attainment was 9.1; for the nation it was 10.6. Almost one-third, 32.6 percent, of the Wilcox County population in 1960 had less than five years of schooling.[12] More than 83 percent of white and Negro adults of the county are classified as functionally illiterate.[13]

> The impotence of the Negro in this squirrel-cage arrangement is a deliberate strategem and programming of white supremacy; the separate and unequal educational structure, its most effective weapon. Even the least contentious critic would find it difficult to defend Wilcox County separationist schools. The high cost of dual services leaves sorry educational gaps in facilities, in programming, in materials, and in professional staffing, even in white schools. Provisions for Negroes are miserably inferior even for Alabama, whose educational quotient falls among the lowest in the country.[14]

POPULATION LOSSES: WHERE HAVE THE EMIGRANTS GONE? During the fifties, the population of Wilcox County decreased from 23,600 to 18,739—a population loss of more than 20 percent. By far the greatest part of this decrease was accounted for by the emigration of Negroes. Displaced from the land and with no industrial or business opportunities open to them at home, thousands of Negro youth and adults—graduates and dropouts from Wilcox County schools—have joined the Negro exodus from the South. In 1960, Wilcox County had 4,000 fewer Negro residents than in 1950.[15]

This emigration from Wilcox County must be multiplied many times over to show the enormity of the population shift among Negroes in recent years. Between 1930 and 1940, the net migration of Negroes from the South totaled 374,500; during the next decade it tripled—to 1,244,700; and there was a further acceleration between 1950 and 1960, when the net migration reached a total of 1,457,000.[16]

Where did the Negro emigrants go? Overwhelmingly to the central cities of large metropolitan areas of the North and West. Thus, cities outside the South have shared the costs in human waste that have resulted as these in-migrants, bearing the scars of Southern segregation, inadequate schooling, and poverty, have become the chronically unemployed and disoriented of urban ghettoes.

What this has meant, specifically, to two great cities is suggested in excerpts from recent school study reports of the National Education Association:

BALTIMORE

> In the decade 1950 to 1960, Baltimore's white population decreased by 113,000. In the same ten-year period, the Negro population increased by more than 100,000. . . . Negroes now make up 41 percent of Baltimore's population.

DETROIT

> During the 1950-1960 decade, the Detroit central city gained more than 183,000 nonwhite residents—an increase of 60.4 percent. Over the ten-year period the percentage of nonwhites of the total urban population increased from 16.5 to 29.2.

BALTIMORE

> The immigration into Baltimore has come after the technological revolution. There are no longer many jobs available for the unskilled and semi-skilled. Baltimore's industry and construction are increasingly moving out of the center city to the suburban counties, exactly where the Negroes are not. Consequently the level of unemployment among this group is extremely high, as is the poverty and discontent.

DETROIT

> As industries, mercantile establishments, and the more affluent resident population have vacated the city, taxable property valuations have dwindled, striking at the very heart of public school support.

BALTIMORE

> Unless the present trend is altered, if middle class white children continue to leave the public schools at the present rate, within less than 15 years *all* of the children in the Baltimore Public Schools could be the children of poverty, and at least 95 percent of them will be Negroes.

DETROIT

> . . . in Detroit, as in other great cities, the imbalance of wealth, education, and social class between races had its origin in rural, impoverished, racially segregated regions. It should be clear that the support of public education can no longer be considered purely in a local or even in a regional context. Ignorance cannot be held in quarantine. The consequences of miseducation and undereducation of American youth—in whatever region they may occur—are cumulative and nationwide.

Wilcox County Public Schools

The Board of Education of Wilcox County Public Schools is a five-member elective body. The NEA Special Committee made a number of inquiries concerning the dates of Board elections in Wilcox County; however, those who were questioned in this regard were unable to recall when the last election of Board members had been held.

The superintendent of schools was appointed by the Wilcox County Board of Education in July 1965. He formerly served in a nearby Alabama county in which the superintendency is an elective office. His predecessor in Wilcox County had retired after 41 years with the Wilcox County schools. Many of the problems facing the current administration were incubated in the preceding decades.

The school district contains 16 schools and, according to the superintendent's August 1966 report to the state department of education, currently employs a professional staff of 195.* The 1965 report showed a total of 193 professional staff members. In 1966-67, Wilcox County schools enrolled 1,115 white and 4,015 Negro students. There were three "high" schools (grades 1-12) for white students, two of which, now under court order, enroll Negroes in grades 1-3 and 7-9. There are seven "high" schools, three junior high schools, and three elementary schools attended and staffed solely by Negroes.

Role of the Church in Public Education in Wilcox County

So far as Negro education is concerned, there has not yet been separation of church and state in Wilcox County. As recently as 1965, more than half of the pupil population in the county attended schools owned and maintained by the National Missions Board of the United Presbyterian Church. The Church Missions Board still owns three schools: Arlington Institute (grades 1-12), enrolling 447 students in 1965, Prairie School (grades 1-6), with an enrollment of 109, and Miller's Ferry School (grades 1-9), enrolling 171 students. The Board of Education owns the high school (Wilcox County Training School) and the property on which it is located at Miller's Ferry, and in recent years (since 1963) constructed a gymnasium and shop building at Arlington Institute. Until 1965, the church also owned

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* Exclusive of reimbursable (from the state) vocational, driver education, and trainable exceptional teachers, and teachers for P.L. 89-10 (ESEA), Titles I and III. According to the 1966-67 budget document, the system employs 15 vocational agriculture and home economics teachers. No budget items are listed for driver education and trainable exceptional teachers or for teachers under Titles I or III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Camden Academy, the largest school in the county, established in 1886, with a 1965 enrollment of 1,012.

These schools were established by the National Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church at a time when the county failed to recognize any obligation whatsoever to educate the Negro population. To compensate for the county's neglect, the Lutheran Church has also operated a number of elementary schools for Negroes in the county. Very gradually, the Board of Education has been assuming an increasing share of the responsibility for education of Negro youth; but it was not until the 1930's that public funds provided a high school for Negroes. It was not until 1942 that the Board of Education began to pay teachers' salaries in the mission schools.

Currently, according to the superintendent's sworn testimony,[17] the Board of Education pays for instructional materials,* janitorial services and supplies,* teachers' salaries, and pupil transportation* at all of the mission schools. Maintenance of the buildings, operation of the lunch rooms, free lunches for children who cannot afford to buy them, and the services of religious education teachers, who function also as school social workers, are provided by the National Missions Board of the United Presbyterian Church. The School Board pays no rent for the church properties. The superintendent of the Church Mission Schools in Wilcox County estimated that the church spends $1,200 a month for free lunches, in addition to the moneys used to provide free clothing to needy children in the schools. He stated that the annual church budget for the schools it currently owns in the county is approximately $65,000.

SCHEDULE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF CHURCH FROM PUBLIC EDUCATION. For a number of years, officials of the Presbyterian Church Missions Board have been hopeful that the County Board of Education would take over the entire school program in order that the Missions Board could shift its emphasis from education to general community services. Church lands have been deeded to the county for erection of public school buildings. One of these was an elementary school built at Camden Academy in 1949.

In the summer of 1965, church and school officials worked out a schedule whereby all of the mission school properties would be deeded over to the County Board of Education in approximately five years. The new superintendent of Wilcox County Schools in 1965 was party to these plans.

CONDEMNATION OF CAMDEN ACADEMY. Other events of 1965 promised or threatened—depending on one's point of view—to change the face of Wilcox County. There was the famed Selma-to-Montgomery march, highlighting a prolonged voting rights campaign involving many citizens of Wilcox; there were the student boycotts of Camden Academy, Lower Peach Tree High School, and other Wilcox County high schools; there were the events of Negroes' registering to vote in Wilcox County for the first time and of Negro students' applying for transfer to white schools in Wilcox County for the first time; and there was the advent of "outside" civil rights groups in Wilcox County for the first time—joining and encouraging Wilcox County citizens in asserting the rights of citizenship. Some of these civil rights workers, including several white ministerial students, were housed in the dormitories of Camden Academy. Church Missions Board officials agreed to allow the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to use the Camden Academy chapel for civil rights meetings.

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* The extent to which these items are provided by the county will be examined in a later section.

The school administration and governmental establishment were not long in responding to this development. It was reported that during the summer of 1965, the county sheriff, the superintendent of schools, and the mayor of Camden went to Camden Academy and asked the resident pastor to file a trespassing charge against the civil rights workers. The pastor refused. Shortly afterward—in August—the County School Board commenced legal action to take over Camden Academy through condemnation. The proceedings were completed by December; and the Wilcox County School Board paid $40,000 for the 40 acres of land, the school buildings, a girls' and boys' dormitory, a minister's home, teacherage, and a shop—all of which the Board would have obtained for $1 had it been willing to wait a few years. But only by immediate acquisition could the County put an end to the civil rights activities headquartered on the Camden Academy property.

On December 23, 1965, while he was ill and hospitalized, the resident pastor of Camden Academy received a letter from the Wilcox County superintendent of schools, notifying him that he would have to vacate his house on the Camden Academy grounds by January 1. The house remained vacant after he had moved. He was the only person asked to move, except for the civil rights workers and ministerial students, who were immediately evicted. Teachers housed on the property were allowed to remain. The Camden Academy chapel (where the civil rights meetings had been held) was ordered torn down by the School Board immediately upon its acquisition of the property.

FINDINGS

The Educational Expenditure in Wilcox County

School budget records from 1955 through 1964 * show the following per pupil expenditures for white and Negro students attending Wilcox County Public Schools:

For total instruction:	$192.00 per white student
	$123.00 per Negro student
For maintenance:	$ 18.07 per white student
	$ .56 per Negro student
For transportation:	$ 40.00 per white student
	$ 10.00 per Negro student
For new buildings and sites:	$ 18.00 per white student
	$ 3.00 per Negro student
For total capital outlay:	$ 26.00 per white student
	$ 6.00 per Negro student [18]

In 1963-64, the per pupil expenditure for white students in Wilcox County was $352—$72 more than the state average per pupil expenditure during that year ($280); for Negro students the per pupil expenditure was $196—$84 less than the state average.

The average amount Wilcox County spent per pupil per year from 1955 through 1964 was $286 for white children and $141 for Negro children.

> That disproportion—over twice as much spent per white pupil as per Negro pupil—only begins to tell the story. Exclusive of expenditures for instruction, for which the state is largely responsible, the average amount the defendants spent per white child per year was more than 5 times greater than the average expenditure per Negro child—$94 for white students and $17 for Negroes.[19]

The perpetuation of separate and unequal school facilities more than a decade after the Supreme Court declared segregated schools inherently unequal was a major factor in the decision of the Wilcox County Teachers Association to request the NEA investigation.

The following section will deal with the specifics of the charges by the Wilcox County Teachers Association and the relevant findings of the NEA Special Committee.

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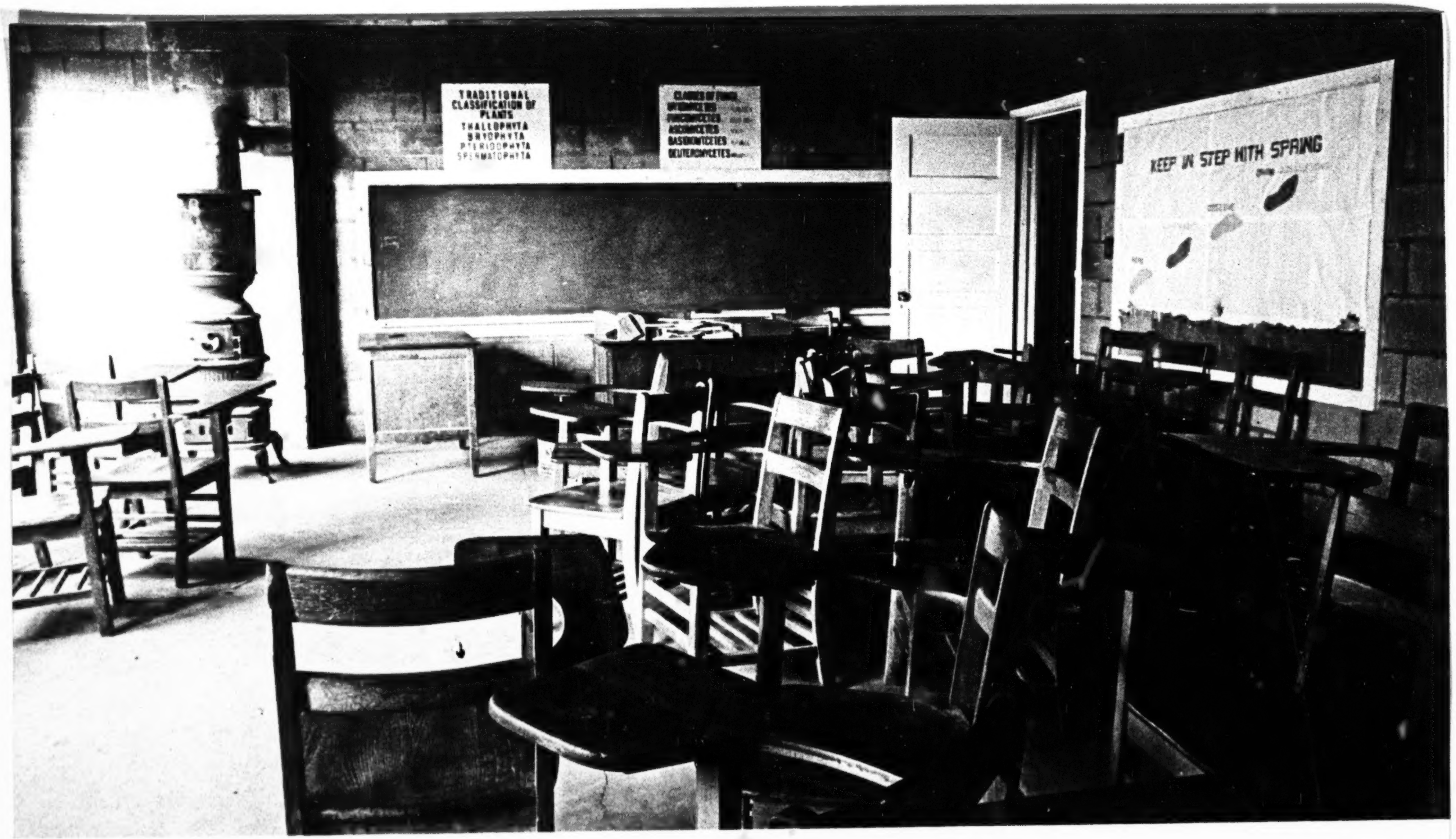
* The last year in which financial records were kept by race in Wilcox County Schools.


TRADITIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF PLANTS
THALLOPHYTA
BRYOPHYTA
PTERIDOPHYTA
SPERMATOPHYTA
CLASSES OF FUNGI
ASCOMYCETES
BASIDIOMYCETES
DEUTEROMYCETES
KEEP IN STEP WITH SPRING

Science Classroom at Lower Peach Tree High School

The Teachers' Charges

There Is a Lack of Adequate Instructional Materials

Testimony received by the NEA Special Committee from Negro teachers in Wilcox County:

> I am in a modern building, but there is no equipment. We have one tape recorder. Some textbooks are provided, but not enough. I bring newspapers and magazines from home. We do not have playground equipment.

. . . .

> We have one overhead projector for the whole school. Textbooks are provided, but not enough. We do not have basic literature books for the ninth grade; there is no developmental reading. There are 24 typewriters, of which 20 are functioning, for a typing class of 31. The school has a science laboratory, but no equipment.

. . . .

> I sell popcorn at lunchtime. I pop the corn, bag it at home, and bring it in. I obtained permission from the principal to do this so that we could raise some money for school supplies. The children come and buy popcorn during the noon hour.

. . . .

> The Parent-Teachers Association is raising money to pay for a used piano that we bought one year ago. We are working and trying to pay for that now.

. . . .

> Beginning last year the state started supplying textbooks, but we do not have enough. In my department there are two grades that do not have enough literature books. We do not have spellers and English grammar books.*

. . . .

> We get things for our schools by any methods we can use to motivate the people to help us operate the schools.

Testimony offered in the U.S. District Court civil suit that placed Wilcox County schools under a court desegregation order in August 1966:

A graduate of Annie Manie School testifying about school conditions in 1965-66:

> Annie Manie has no foreign language or physics course. Chemistry is available, but there are only four spots for experiments. Two students work at each spot. There were 48 students in my chemistry class;

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* See p. 36; the state initiated a free textbook program in junior and senior high school grades in 1965. This testimony was given by a junior high school teacher.

> while eight conduct experiments, the other 40 watch and take notes. We had experiments only on Fridays.
>
> Textbooks are furnished by the school board. This year is the only year that they were. We had about 25 chemistry books in my class [for the 48 students].[20]

A student at Lower Peach Tree High School:

> I've taken biology. The only animals we conducted any experiments with were frogs. The students would go out to the pool and catch the frogs. We didn't dissect the frogs. We looked at them in the classroom. There is no lab. . . . I did not work on the frog.
>
> There is a chemistry classroom, but no chemistry lab. No senior took either chemistry or physics this past year.[21]

A former teacher with the system testifying about conditions at Camden Academy:

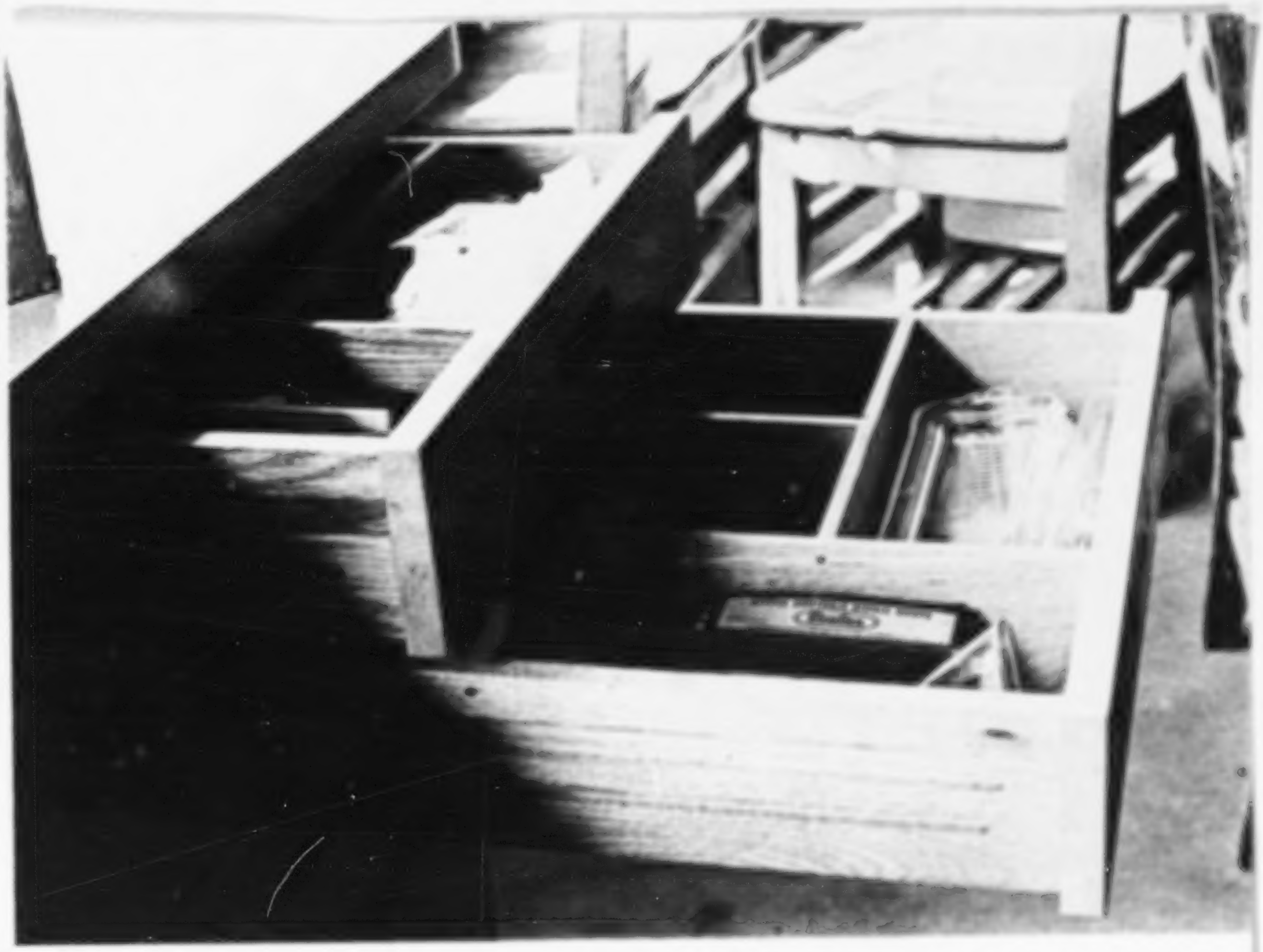
> The physical education equipment is about naught. It is the largest school in the county without a gym. The materials that we used in the class were bought by me.[22]

An employee of Southern Christian Leadership Conference who worked in Wilcox County during 1965-66 reporting on her observations in the schools attended by Negro students:

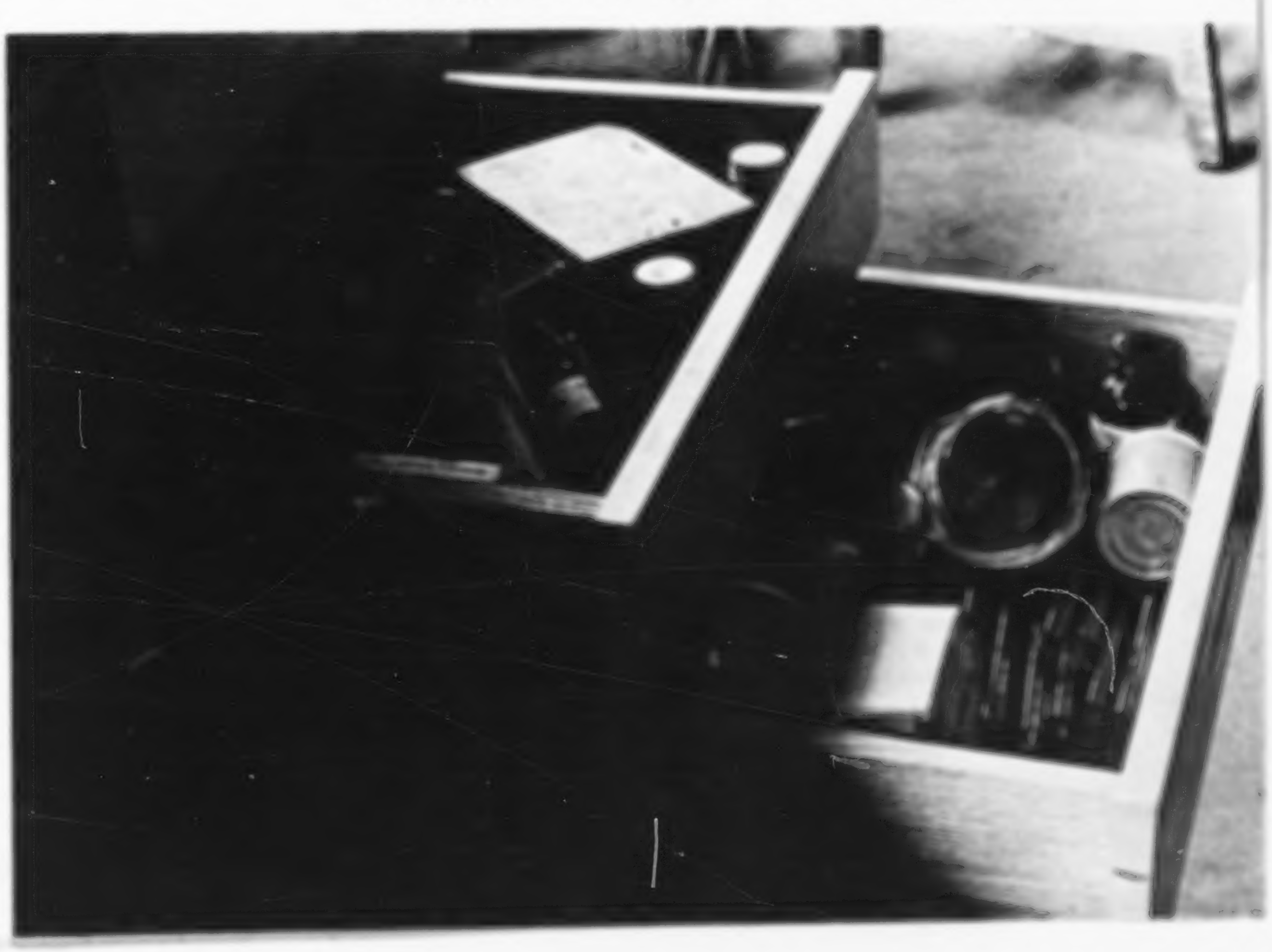
> In many schools, there were more students than textbooks.
>
> In Boykin School, I went into the science room; there were three pieces of visual aid material, which comprised the complete equipement for grades 7 through 12. One was a jar holding a pickled frog in suspension. There was a battered elements chart. And there was a broken model of a human heart. At the time I went into the math room [November 1965], there was no math teacher. . . . The blackboard was so scarred that writing was illegible beyond twelve feet. In the music room, the piano was not in playing condition.
>
> . . . .
>
> [In other schools] the visual aids were a little better than the ones I found at Boykin, but not much better.[23]

This is further supported by evidence in the Wilcox County desegregation case:

> One reason for the low-quality science classes is a simple lack of supplies and equipment. Row upon row of bottles, chemicals, flasks, crucibles, and Bunsen burners greet a visitor to the science rooms at the white high schools. At the Negro schools one sees a closet of five desk drawers that contain a dozen or so jars of chemicals (Boykin and Lower Peach Tree) and storage rooms with less than half the shelf space for chemicals as at the white schools (Camden Academy and Wilcox County Training School).[24]



The Supply of Chemicals at Lower Peach Tree High School



The co-chairmen of the NEA Special Committee asked the superintendent of public schools to respond to each of the charges that had been made by the Wilcox County Teachers Association in its investigation request. Concerning the alleged lack of instructional materials and equipment, the superintendent said that he would agree that this was an accurate statement if the Special Committee were willing to look at a definition of adequate instructional materials in the context of Wilcox County's being a Black Belt county in the South and compare it with national norms.

Financial records for the school system clearly identify the schools in which the shortage of instructional supplies is most severe:

> Purchase orders for 1965-66 indicate that for instructional supplies the defendants spent $2,884 in white schools and $2,131 in Negro schools—a per pupil average of $2.75 for white students and 48 cents for Negroes. Seven of the 15 Negro schools received no instructional supplies at all while each of the white schools received at least $400 worth.

The 1966-67 school budget for Wilcox County, while showing a lesser disparity between the projected expenditure for Negro and predominantly white schools is nevertheless clearly lopsided in spite of a court order barring discrimination. According to the budget breakdown, a total of $3,500 is allocated for instructional supplies in the 1966-67 school year. Five hundred dollars of this is listed as being distributed among "all schools." Budget allocations for the remaining $3,000 show an expenditure of 90 cents per pupil in white schools and 46 cents in Negro schools. The instructional supplies budget allocation for each school and on a per pupil basis is shown in Table 1.

Testimony received by the Committee strongly indicated that the amounts allocated in the 1966-67 budget for Wilcox County Negro schools, meagre as they are, reflect a larger distribution of funds to these schools than in the past. If the current year's budget projections have been adhered to, 1966-67 has been the first year in which a number of Negro schools have received any county allocation at all for instructional supplies.

TEXTBOOKS. For a number of years the State of Alabama has furnished some free textbooks to public school pupils in grades 1 through 6, although the per pupil allocation has been insufficient to furnish the required number of textbooks even on this limited basis.* In 1965, the state

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* On October 8, 1964, an article in the *Alabama Journal*, entitled "State's Free Textbook Claim Questioned," reported the statements of parents, teachers, and school officials in several Alabama school districts, in which they charged the state had not provided enough money to make good its claim of a free textbook program in grades 1 through 6. It was reported that several parent-teacher groups were raising money to pay for needed textbooks. A superintendent was quoted as saying that at approximately

Table 1

1966-67 Budget Allocation for Instructional Supplies

School	*Enrollment**	*Total Allocation*	*Per Pupil Allocation*
Predominantly			
White (grades 1-12)			
Moore Academy	136	$150	$1.10
Wilcox County	590	475	.81
Pine Hill	322	325	1.01
Negro (grades 1-12)			
Annie Manie	450	250	.56
Boykin	454	250	.56
Lower Peach Tree	308	200	.65
Snow Hill	340	200	.59
W. J. Jones	429	250	.58
Wilcox Co. Training	266	250	.94
Camden Academy	989	250	.25
Negro (Jr. High)			
Alberta	210	100	.48
Tates Chapel	221	50	.23
Pine Hill	253	200	.79
Coy Public	112	25	.22
Negro (grades 1-6)			
Canton Bend	119	25	.21
Prairie Mission	109	0	0

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* Enrollment figures as of October 1965. No more recent enrollment data for the individual schools were available to the NEA Special Committee. Not included in the above enrollment figures are the 162 students who were enrolled in 1965-66 in Yellow Bluff and Burson Schools, which have since been closed. In the school or schools that received these students in 1966-67, the enrollment figure would be larger than is shown in the table.

legislature adopted a bill and earmarked funds † for a free textbook program in all grades of the state's elementary and secondary schools. Following the 1965 legislation, as in past years, distribution of the textbooks has been the responsibility of local school districts.

There is evidence that in Wilcox County all schools have not received all the textbooks to which they were entitled by attendance records and curriculum requirements:

> Science books to first graders: There had been no such books in Wilcox County, Alabama, in December 1965. From an equal start, then, at zero, white children moved up to 120 science texts (1.4 per pupil), while Negroes stopped at 83 (.2 per pupil).[25]
>
> As of June 1966, there were 18,719 textbooks in Negro schools (excluding the Negro schools for which no inventory is available)* and 10,974 in white schools—10.9 textbooks per white pupil and 6.9 textbooks per Negro pupil.[26]

> The discriminatory operation of the free textbook program in Wilcox . . . was instituted and carried out by the present superintendent. In the first year of the program's existence, and of his administration, the present superintendent oversaw an operation that distributed over ⅔ again as many textbooks to each white child as to each Negro child—textbooks that cost the county nothing.[27]

There Are Some Classrooms with 50 to 80 Pupils per Teacher

Some of the 1965-66 classroom enrollments reported to NEA Special Committee by the Wilcox County Teachers Association:

Camden Academy:	63 students in one first-grade section, 55 in the other; 83 students in the fourth-grade classroom; more than 60 students in fifth-grade class.
Annie Manie H.S.:	53 students in third-grade classroom.
Boykin H.S.:	A combined elementary classroom with more than 60 students.

$1.50 per child, the state textbook allocation did not go far enough to buy anything. "I wish they [the state]," he said, "would either furnish us with the free textbooks for the lower five grades or not say they are doing it."

† The appropriation did not reflect any sudden largesse on the part of the state, but was made possible through a surplus of state school moneys that had accumulated in the Special Educational Trust Fund, the major source of state aid to public schools. Moneys from this surplus were also appropriated for the state tuition grant program, which the courts have declared illegal.

* Attorneys for the plaintiff reported that textbook inventories were not available from five Negro schools—Lower Peach Tree, Annie Manie, Wilcox County Training School, Tates Chapel, and Canton Bend. The enrollments of these schools were not used in obtaining the total per pupil figures.

Table 2

Number of Textbooks, Science Texts, and Readers per Pupil June 1966, by Race, by Grade

Grades	*Total Textbooks per Pupil*[28]*		*Science Texts per Pupil*[29]†		*Readers per Pupil*[29]†	
	W	*N*	*W*	*N*	*W*	*N*
1st	20.9	4.9	1.4	.2	7.3	1.1
2nd	14.1	5.4	2.5	.8	7.9	2.5
3rd	15.7	5.7				
4th	11.2	7.3				
5th	12.3	7.0				
6th	14.0	7.6	1.8	.9	4.6	1.5
7th	8.3	6.7	1.4	.9		
8th	5.7	4.9				
9th	6.0	7.1				
10th	6.4	5.5				
11th	5.8	4.0	.8	.8		
12th	5.6	6.8	.5	.7		
TOTAL	10.5	6.2				

* The above per pupil figures do not include the enrollments of five Negro schools for which June 1966 textbook inventories were not available. See footnote on preceding page.

† In an explanatory note, attorneys for plaintiff stated: "Science texts and readers were chosen for this table because of their importance. Grades 1, 2, 6, 7, 11, and 12 were selected for a representative sampling and to show that the most serious discrimination occurs in the low elementary grades. Included in the figures for 'readers' are both 'readers' and 'reading' books . . .; excluded are primers and pre-primers. There are no readers in grades 7, 11, and 12. Enrollment figures for the five Negro schools without inventories were excluded; in addition, as the number of science texts at Wilcox County High School for grade 12 was not reported, we excluded the twelfth grade enrollment for that school."

Snow Hill Institute:	A combined fifth and sixth grade with 51 students.
Tates Chapel:	A combined first and second grade with 65 students.
Wilcox County Training School:	A combined first, second, and third grade with 53 students.

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSE. The superintendent told the NEA Special Committee that on the basis of ADA, he has assigned an adequate number of teachers to meet the state standards. He stated that there were two first grades in Camden Academy, each with 50 pupils, but expressed the view that the problem had to do with the failure of the principals to divide grades in such a way as to avoid overloading any one teacher.

At the court hearing in the Wilcox County school desegregation case, the superintendent was questioned specifically about the large number of students in Camden Academy's fourth-grade classroom in 1965-66. His response, recorded in the court transcript, was, "I did hear that one teacher had 84 pupils in a class. I decided that was a matter for the principal and that he must have some reason for it."

Evidence Presented in Wilcox County Desegregation Case:

> The load for Negro teachers in the elementary department at Camden Academy is 50.3 students per teacher, at Boykin—over 40; also over 40 at Annie Manie and Tates Chapel. There are 11 Negro classes with over 50 children in the same room—a total of 662 children. There is only one white classroom with more than 50 students in it.
>
> At Camden Academy, 83 Negro students are in the fourth grade.
>
> At Tates Chapel Junior High School (Negro), one lady teaches 66 students in grades one and two, while another has 55 children in the third and fourth grades. Less than one-half of the Negro fourth graders—213 of 466—have a teacher who teaches no other grade.
>
> In 1965-66, there were 47 white teachers for 1,048 white students, and 150 Negro teachers for 4,422 Negro students. There would have to be 198 teachers in the Negro schools to bring their pupil-teacher ratio from the present 29.5-1 to the white ratio of 22.3-1.[30]

Table 3 lists the number of pupils per teacher by race and by school in the elementary, junior high, and senior high departments of the Wilcox County Public Schools in 1965-66. The table shows, as in the matter of instructional supplies, a dual inequality. The most overloaded classrooms are in the Negro schools, most particularly in the elementary grades of the Negro schools.

FAILURE TO UTILIZE STATE SALARY ALLOCATIONS. Teachers' salaries comprise the chief form of state aid to Alabama school districts. The number of teacher units allocated to a school district under the State Minimum Program Fund is determined by a formula that considers the

Table 3[31]

Number of Pupils per Teacher by Race and by School

Schools	*Grades 1-6*	*Grades 7-12*	*All Grades*
White			
(Grades 1-12)			
Moore Academy	24.3	7.9	12.4
Pine Hill	24.7	17.4	20.1
Wilcox County	37.4	24.2	29.5
Total White	30.6	17.6	22.3
Negro			
(Grades 1-12)			
Annie Manie	42.8	26.2	32.1
Boykin	43.0	32.7	37.8
Camden Academy	50.3	27.0	35.3
Lower Peach Tree	28.0	23.3	25.7
Snow Hill	38.8	20.4	26.2
Wilcox County Training	47.0	15.6	20.5
W. J. Jones	37.7	22.6	28.6
Total	41.5	23.8	30.2
(Grades 1-9)		*Grades 7-9*	
Alberta	30.8	18.7	26.3
Coy	25.7	8.8	16.0
Pine Hill	38.5	33.0	36.1
Tates Chapel	42.8	12.5	27.6
Total	34.8	17.1	26.5
(Grades 1-6)			
Burson	26.0	....	26.0
Canton Bend	29.8	....	29.8
Prairie	27.3	....	27.3
Yellow Bluff	36.7	....	36.7
Total	30.0	....	30.0
Total Negro	37.7	22.7	29.5

grade level of each school, the average daily attendance of each school, and whether the school is located at a site the state department of education approves. According to this formula, the state department allots to each school district the number of teaching units the state will support. Until 1965, the state allotted Negro teacher units and white teacher units separately. Money for teachers' salaries is the only state school allocation that must be used for its earmarked purpose or be forfeited by the local district.

In the Wilcox County school desegregation case, the former superintendent of schools testified as follows:

> During several years, we could not use all the available Negro teacher units because of space problems. During 1964-65 [the school year preceding the dismissal of nine Negro teachers], we turned $20,000 of Negro teacher-unit money back to the state. We turned that amount back more than once. We used all the white teacher units. We hired eight white teachers over the state allotment, and the board paid those teachers' salaries with county money. That was necessary to get accreditation at the white schools.[32]

Thus, in 1964-65, "for no better reason than a lack of space,"[33] Wilcox County failed to employ four Negro teachers for whom teacher unit allocations were available from the state. And that same year, the Board of Education employed eight extra white teachers, to be paid solely out of county funds.

The *Plaintiff's Trial Brief* in the school desegregation suit showed that—

> In 1964-65, the ADA in Wilcox County was 288 lower than it had been in 1963-64. This brought about a reduction of approximately 10 in the number of teacher units available to Wilcox County from the state. The reduction was compensated by firing nine Negro teachers, even though the County had been carrying eight extra white teachers and at least four fewer Negro teachers than the State would support. The net result is that there are still fewer Negro teachers in Wilcox County than the Negro schools earned through ADA and more white teachers than the white schools earned. Lack of space can no longer be used as the excuse for the disparity, as there must have been space in the past for the nine fired Negro teachers.[34]

There Are Dilapidated and Overcrowded Transportation Facilities

Testimony received by the NEA Special Committee:

A teacher reported that the three buses serving her school and the adjoining school are severely overcrowded. As many as 40 children are standees. Eighty-seven children are on a bus designed for 45. In 1965, 30 students were almost asphyxiated by fumes on a bus and had to be given medical treatment.

Table 4

Summary of Transportation Reports, 1964-65 [37]

	White	*Negro*
Number of students transported	658	3,215
Seating capacity	872	2,352
Number of buses	18	45
Average age of buses	5.5	11.2
Number of trips over capacity	1 (car, not bus)	31
Number of students on overloaded trips	9	2,198
Number of second and third trips	0	11
Average number of transported pupils per bus	36.6	71.4

Students from Lower Peach Tree High School said that their buses "are old and rundown and have no heat." The school buses, they said, break down on an average of once a month; once broken down, they stay out of service for a week or longer. "For one week and a half of this year," a student reported, "the bus stayed broken down. During that time we would either walk to school or we would start walking and if the bus on the other route finished its run in time, the driver of that bus would pick us up where we were along the way to school."

The two buses to Lower Peach Tree School each make two runs. One student at the school reported that he is on the first trip in the morning and has to leave home at 6:45 A.M.; he rides the last bus in the evening, arriving home about 4:30 P.M.

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSE. The superintendent provided information to show that the Wilcox County school system owns 73 buses. Thirty-seven are more than 10 years old; 30 are more than 12 years old; 25 have been purchased since 1962. Twenty-nine buses have a 10 percent overload above seating capacity; 17 have a serious overload—25 percent or more.

Evidence from the Wilcox County school desegregation case:

> The 26 oldest buses are assigned to Negro schools. Of those 26 buses, at least 10 had initially been assigned to white schools, then given to the Negroes when the white children got newer buses.[33]
>
> While the defendants have assigned the oldest 26 buses to Negro schools, they have given 13 of the newest 25 buses to white students. The average age of the 17 white buses in 1965 was 5.5 years, compared with 11.2 years for the 45 Negro buses. No white bus was over 11 years old.
>
> Bus 30, a 1948 Chevrolet with a capacity of 48, carries 115 Negroes to Wilcox County Training School in one trip.
>
> Bus 39 transports 100 children at a time. Over half the trips Negro buses make are overcrowded. Ten Negro buses have to make two, even three trips every morning; no white bus makes a second trip. (No white student rides an overcrowded bus, although one private car with a capacity of six transports nine white students.) [34]

BUS DRIVERS' SALARIES. The unequal allocation of funds in Wilcox County schools extends itself even to the salaries of bus drivers, as shown in the following report of the Plaintiff in the desegregation suit:

> The current superintendent volunteered that Negro bus drivers receive $25 less per month than white bus drivers. He claimed that when he first came to work in Wilcox County he did not know the salaries were different and that, in fact, he had granted both Negro and white bus drivers equal pay raises of $13.50 per month—to $88.50 a month

for Negroes and $113.50 a month for white drivers. In fact, the present superintendent had little to do with the raise, as the state legislature required it. (Minutes of the Board show: "The board states it is granting a pay raise to bus drivers in order to meet the requirements imposed by the legislative act.")[38]

There Are Insufficient Toilet Facilities

Students and teachers reported, and NEA Special Committee members observed, that most of the Negro schools in Wilcox County have, in fact, no indoor toilet facilities at all. The schools have outhouses, most of them in miserably unsanitary condition. The NEA Special Committee was told that only two Negro high schools have shower rooms for physical education. Students who are participating in intramural basketball use a classroom or an outdoor toilet in which to change clothes. In some schools, it was reported, there are no facilities even for washing hands.

The Plaintiff's exhibits in the desegregation suit further substantiated this charge. It is reported in one exhibit that all but 4 of the 15 Negro schools have outdoor toilets and 8 Negro schools have no indoor plumbing at all, whereas no white school in the county has an outdoor toilet.

The NEA Special Committee asked the former state superintendent of public instruction about this problem in Wilcox County. His response was that the school system would not receive public support for building in the schools facilities that are not provided in the homes. Since few of the homes in the county have indoor toilet facilities, he said, there would be resentment on the part of parents if the schools provide what the homes do not provide.

The Wilcox County superintendent reported, however, that this is one school condition for which improvement is imminent. He stated that the system would improve toilet facilities at every school in the county by the beginning of school year 1967-68.

There Are No Libraries in Some Schools and an Insufficient Supply of Books in Others

Testimony of teachers interviewed by NEA Special Committee:

> This is one of our worst problems. There are high schools with no library. Books are provided by donation. We have 1,000 volumes in our school. The United Presbyterian Church has provided some books and children bring in money for some.
>
> . . . .
>
> We bought 500 library books about three years ago. We raised the money through PTA and classroom projects. There is no room for a library. We just took some classrooms in the new school and I cleaned

them up and we put books in there. We have bookcases with shelves we provided.

Lower Peach Tree is one of the high schools without a library. Students from Lower Peach Tree reported that the extent of their supplemental book collection is "a few encyclopedias and some dictionaries."

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSE. The superintendent told the co-chairmen of the NEA Special Committee that the school system had applied for $40,000 worth of library books since December 10, 1966, when the Special Committee made its first visit to Wilcox County. He expressed confidence that $24,000 would be provided for this purpose from Title I funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. He did not specify how the funds would be apportioned in the predominantly white and Negro schools of the county.

In his testimony during the Wilcox County school desegregation case, the superintendent said that he did not know whether the Presbyterian Church Missions Board had contributed to the Camden Academy library or all the books in this Negro high school's library had been provided by donors. He expressed the opinion that the library facilities at Camden Academy were "much better" than at Wilcox County High School (all white in 1965-66) but stated that it was "hard to tell" which had more books.[illegible] Camden Academy is the only school in the county accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Attorneys for the plaintiff in the desegregation suit, quoting from school records, stated that in 1965-66 there were 6,499 books in the library at Wilcox County High School (36.7 per pupil) and 2,498 at Camden Academy (8.2 per pupil).

Only four of the seven Negro high schools in Wilcox County are accredited by the Alabama State Department of Education (p. 00), whereas all of the white schools are so accredited. As of 1965-66, the average number of library books per high school pupil in the three white schools was 30.8. At the four accredited Negro schools it was 8.3. Table 5 shows the number of books per pupil at each of the seven accredited high schools.

Uncertainty of Teacher Employment Is Forever Prevalent

The superintendent of schools, in an interview with the co-chairmen of the NEA Special Committee, asserted that teachers in Wilcox County have had more *security* since he took office than they ever had before.

The evidence to the contrary raises serious questions in this regard.

Shortly after the present administration took office in July 1965, the Wilcox County Board of Education *dismissed* the nine Negro teachers, most of whom had many years' tenure and full professional certification.

Table 5

Library Books per Pupil by Race [illegible]

School	*No. of Books*	*Books Per Pupil (1-12)*	*Books Per Pupil (7-12)*	*Books Per Pupil (9-12)*
White				
(Grades 1-12)				
Moore Academy	1,200	8.8	19.0	30.8
Pine Hill	2,466	7.7	14.1	21.6
Wilcox County	6,499	11.0	22.3	36.7
Total	10,165	9.7	19.3	30.8
*Negro**				
(Grades 1-12)				
Camden Academy	2,498	2.5	5.1	8.2
Snow Hill Institute	1,017	3.0	5.5	8.9
Wilcox County Training	659	2.5	3.8	5.7
W. J. Jones	1,238	2.9	6.1	10.5
Total	5,412	2.7	5.2	8.3

* No figures were available for the other, unaccredited Negro schools.

It was during the present administration that the Wilcox County Board of Education adopted a resolution proposing abolition of the state teacher tenure law in Wilcox County. As noted in the chronology, this proposal was adopted by the Alabama legislature in August 1966.

It was under the present administration that the Wilcox County School Board refused to reinstate the four Negro teachers as ordered by the State Teacher Tenure Commission when the Commission declared the dismissals illegal.

A statement attributed to the present superintendent is reported in the press: "If the Tenure Commission will send us the money, we'd be glad to hire all nine of them back."

The present superintendent in February 1966 wrote a letter to the *Mobile Press Register*, which took issue with a report in that paper of overcrowded conditions in Wilcox County classrooms for Negroes. In this article he stated that it might be necessary to dismiss 24 more Negro teachers in 1966-67.

The Committee is not convinced that Negro teachers have more security than before and would agree not only that this charge of the Wilcox County Teachers Association is substantiated, but that without a tenure law, no teacher in the county has professional security.

LOWERED ADA IN 1964-65: A REASON OR AN EXCUSE? The alleged reason for the dismissal of the nine Negro teachers in 1965 was the loss of teacher unit allocations due to lowered attendance in Negro schools in 1964-65.

The fact is, however, that the Wilcox County Board of Education had not been using all of the available Negro teacher units prior to 1965. In 1964-65, $20,000 in teacher unit allocations had not been claimed from the state—enough to pay the salaries of four teachers.

The fact is, also, that teachers, both white and Negro, were employed in Wilcox County following the dismissal of the nine Negro teachers in August 1965 and that some of the newly employed teachers, as well as those who were retained, had less training and experience than the dismissed teachers.

The superintendent of schools verified this in his testimony in the Wilcox County school desegregation suit when he made these statements:

> I have never had all teacher positions filled when school opened. . . . We did hire some Negro teachers last year. . . . There are white and Negro teachers in the Wilcox County School system who have less years of service than [two of the dismissed teachers]. I believe we do have teachers in the Wilcox County school system without degrees.[41]

The official reason given for the retention and new employment of teachers less qualified than the dismissed tenure teachers was that these dismissed teachers were not qualified in the particular subject areas for which teachers were needed in the system.

Information received by the NEA Special Committee indicated that Wilcox County teachers are often assigned out of their field. The 1966-67 Wilcox County teacher directories show teachers assigned to such disparate subject combinations as social studies, science, and English; math, English, and science; and social studies, math, and physical education. One is moved to question whether all the teachers so assigned actually have the required professional training to work in such divergent subject areas.

In his interview with the Special Committee co-chairmen, the superintendent explained that because he was new to the school system and unfamiliar with the qualifications of any of the teaching staff in the summer of 1965, when word came from the state that teacher unit allocations would be reduced, he asked the Negro principals to select teachers to be dismissed.

The superintendent's statement left several questions unanswered.

Why was it the new superintendent's responsibility to dismiss the nine teachers in 1965? What prevented the former superintendent and the Board of Education from adhering to the Alabama teacher tenure law (then applicable in Wilcox County), which requires that dismissal notice, with a statement of reasons, be delivered to tenure teachers no later than the final day of the term preceding the contemplated nonrenewal of contract? Since teacher unit allocations for a given year are made on the basis of the prior year's ADA, and since this record had to be submitted to the state by the former superintendent, it should not have been difficult for him to predict from 1964-65 school attendance records that there would be a teacher unit reduction in 1965-66. The former superintendent should have notified the teachers of any reduction in a legal and orderly manner.

Why did the current superintendent choose to dismiss teachers from predetermined schools rather than from the system as a whole? Since the state department of education no longer allocated teacher units separately for white and Negro schools in 1965-66, it can be assumed that the loss of teacher units that year was for Wilcox County as a whole. Wilcox County school officials did not dismiss teachers from the system as a whole, but from specific schools—specifically from Negro schools.

WHY THE DISMISSALS IN 1965? In August 1965, an enrollment decrease was anticipated for Lower Peach Tree High School due to the planned withdrawal of students who had been attending the school from two adjoining counties. However, since teacher units are allocated by the state on the basis of the prior year's attendance, not on the basis of projected enrollments, this hardly seems justifiable as a basis for the 1965 dismissals.

Average daily attendance at Lower Peach Tree High School and other Negro high schools had been lowered during the spring of 1965 when students conducted boycotts protesting denial of voting rights to Negro citizens and inequality of educational opportunity. However, the record shows that in previous years there has seldom been correlation between the number of teachers provided for in the state's teacher unit allocation to Negro schools in Wilcox County and the number of teachers actually assigned to those schools.

Why then were the nine Negro teachers dismissed in August 1965? Why were these particular teachers dismissed when other teachers were retained and appointed who were less qualified on the basis of training and experience than those who were dismissed? The NEA Special Committee asked these questions repeatedly during its interviews with Wilcox County teachers, former teachers, and lay citizens.

What they had to say about two of the dismissed teachers—and what the teachers said about themselves—strongly suggested that desire for reprisal was a reason for their dismissal.

One of the dismissed tenure teachers had signed bond for some of the voter registration workers who were jailed during the summer of 1965.

In one school—Lower Peach Tree High School—the principal refused to select a teacher to be dismissed. In this case, the central office made the selection. A 16-year tenure teacher, in whose behalf 100 parents later petitioned the Board for reinstatement, was chosen. He was one of the Negro parents of Wilcox County who earlier in the summer had applied for transfer of his two children to white schools. He also had participated openly in voter registration activities, driving Negro citizens to the courthouse to register to vote and lodging in his home some of the civil rights workers in the county.

In a letter dated August 10, 1965, responding to an inquiry from the ASTA executive secretary, the superintendent gave his "reasons" for selecting this particular teacher to be fired:

> The Wilcox County Board of Education lost teacher units during the past year because of a loss in average daily attendance. The Lower Peach Tree High School employed 13 teachers last year. They earned 12.13 teachers this year. We are allowing them 12 teachers.
>
> I asked the principal of that school to name which teacher he wanted removed. He would not do this. Since all teachers have tenure and since all teachers have a "B" certificate, and since [the teacher] and his wife both are employed by the Board of Education, and since he is a minister and has some other source of income, I recommended to the Board that he not be re-employed.
>
> It is always a very difficult and unpleasant task to choose some teacher to be released. If they will not name someone, then I make as

> careful choice as I can and where there are no guidelines that I can use to go by, I use a random choice.

Most of the teachers interviewed by the NEA Special Committee believed that the selection of this teacher for dismissal was the result of no random choice but was a direct reprisal for his civil rights activities and his attempt to enroll his sons in a white school.

Not all of the fired Negro teachers had been active in voter registration work, but the feeling was prevalent among those interviewed that, by and large, the Negro teacher dismissals in August 1965 and the superintendent's subsequent letter to the press, stating that it might be necessary to fire 24 additional teachers, were attempts on the part of Wilcox County school officials to prevent other Negro teachers in the county from asserting their rights as citizens.

There Is a Proposal To Abolish the Teacher Tenure Law

A proposal to abolish teacher tenure, adopted first as a resolution of the Wilcox County Board of Education in March 1965, later was introduced by the Wilcox County delegates to the state legislature and adopted into law. The Special Committee was informed that, as a matter of legislative "courtesy" and custom, when the senator and the representative from a district agree that a bill is needed for that district, the bill almost always is passed without opposition or debate. Thus, Wilcox has become the ninth of the Alabama counties—all in the Black Belt—in which the state teacher tenure law has been repealed.

The Wilcox County superintendent of schools told the co-chairmen of the Special Committee that he has always been in favor of teacher tenure and has, in fact, put his job on the line for it—his former job in another county. In Wilcox County, however, he feels that the teachers had taken undue advantage of their tenure rights, and as a result, he has come to believe that tenure "hamstrings" the school administration in getting rid of poor teachers. The chairman of the Wilcox County Board of Education expressed agreement with this point of view.

There Is an Absence of Personnel Policies

"The teachers in Wilcox County," one teacher commented, "do not know what they are supposed to do or not supposed to do as it relates to their professional activities."

The superintendent acknowledged the need for written personnel policies in the Wilcox County school system. He expressed an intention to have teachers meet with him to develop personnel policies. When asked if he would be averse to the idea of the teachers' working on a racially integrated committee to develop such policies, the superintendent indicated that he would not object to the formation of such a committee for this purpose.

The Compulsory School Attendance Law Is Not Enforced

The superintendent agreed that this is a true statement. He supplied the NEA Special Committee with information on attendance figures for 1965-66, which showed consistently high attendance rates for both white and Negro schools—mostly above 90 percent. However, there have always been severe seasonal drops in attendance in the Negro schools when students have stayed out to work in the fields at harvesting and planting time. One exhibit accompanying the plaintiff's testimony in the Wilcox County school desegregation suit is the monthly attendance reports for October 1965 from each school in Wilcox County. The reports show that during the month of October 1965, 11 white children were absent for work for a total of 12 days and 2,447 Negro children—more than half of the total Negro enrollment—were absent for work for a total of 9,213 days.[40]

It was not until 1965, following activation of the Civil Rights Movement in Wilcox and adjoining counties and the prolonged boycotts of Wilcox County Negro high schools, that either state or local officials appeared to be concerned about the attendance problem in Negro schools. Their concern took the form of punitive rather than corrective action.

By legislative and administrative fiat, teachers were held liable for the participation of their students in school boycotts and were themselves threatened with loss of a salary increase for engaging in civil rights activities.

In April 1965, the Alabama legislature appropriated funds for a 10 percent teacher salary increase but disqualified for this increase any teachers taking part in, or accused of aiding, demonstrations.

In May 1965, the Alabama State Board of Education adopted a resolution withholding state funds for payment of teachers and/or principals for any day on which their classrooms and/or schools had less than 63 percent pupil attendance. The sponsor of this resolution was the State Board member from Camden, Wilcox County, where students had boycotted the Negro high school, Camden Academy.

The concern and resentment with which Negro citizens responded to this resolution was expressed by the Wilcox County Civic League in a letter, dated May 24, to the Wilcox County State Board of Education member:

> This letter is in direct response to your resolution recently unanimously approved by the State Board of Education, which prohibits use of state funds to pay teachers or principals for any day when attendance falls below 63 percent of the enrollment.

> We would like to know what concern motivated you to sponsor or propose such a resolution? Certainly it was not concern for the educational development of the students. For had it been, something would have been done to remedy the situation years ago. For all through the years up to the present, white plantation owners have kept Negro students out of school four months a year to work and gather the crops. Absences in such instances are upheld by the County Superintendent and the Truant Officer. Why do you not propose to do something about this situation?
>
> . . . .
>
> Why should Negro teachers and principals be given the responsibilities which belong to the truant officer? Should Negro teachers and principals be punished simply because the young generation is becoming more aware of its civic responsibilities, and its privileges under the law?

The Alabama State Teachers Association also expressed its opposition to the State Board's action. On May 29, 1965, the ASTA adopted a resolution containing the following language:

> Let it be known that the ASTA has no quarrels with any agency or anyone who supports maximum pupil attendance or a conducive atmosphere for learning. Be it further known that the Alabama State Teachers Association is troubled when there is wholesale absenteeism, even when pupils are in the cotton fields and responsible agencies remain quiet.
>
> The Alabama State Teachers Association rejects this resolution because it places the burden on Negro teachers to halt a social revolution that is sweeping the entire world and one which the President, governors, heads of states, mayors or supervisors of education have not been able to stop.
>
> The Alabama State Teachers Association questions this resolution because it relieves the parents and truant officers of the responsibility of keeping children in school and places this requirement on teachers.
>
> . . . .
>
> The Alabama State Teachers Association would like to make its position unmistakably clear that it will support any act or decree that is for the advancement of education, but when any agency or person uses the educational process as a tool to pursue ends inconsistent with educational advancement, it lacks the support of the Alabama State Teachers Association and to that end the Alabama State Teachers Association will not cooperate.

All School Facilities, Students, and Teachers Are Segregated

This was an accurate statement of fact in March 1966, when the charge was made. During the summer of 1965, a number of Negro students in Wilcox County, attempting to exercise freedom of choice in accordance with the alleged policy of the Wilcox County Board of Education, had applied for transfer to white schools in the county. No Negro students were admitted to white schools in Wilcox County during 1965-66, although several white students from neighboring Dallas County were accepted for transfer to Wilcox County white schools following the closure of their Dallas County school.

In November 1965, the U.S. government filed suit, under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, to end the dual school system in Wilcox County.

On March 24, 1966, the present superintendent of Wilcox County schools notified school patrons of the desegregation suit by means of the following letter:

> To: Parents and Guardians
>
> From: Wilcox County Board of Education
>
> The Justice Department has filed suit against the Wilcox County Board of Education in Federal Court, the purpose of which is to prohibit the Board from operating a dual school system in the County as it has done in the past.
>
> In an effort to prevent the destruction of the school system of Wilcox County as we know it and realizing what is best, we are asking that you promote and encourage your children to continue in the schools in which they are now attending. In our honest opinion, integration or desegregation is not good for education; it is against sound educational principles and works to the disadvantage and to the detriment of both races. It is our further opinion that in all this controversy the person who has invariably suffered is the child.
>
> The Wilcox County Board of Education intends to do all in its power to continue to work towards complete equality of educational opportunity for every child in the County regardless of race, color or creed.
>
> The people of this County will, in all probability, have to continue to live here in this county together after the influences from without have ceased. It is best for all if they can do so in a mutual spirit of good will. We all need the good will and support of our fellow citizens.
>
> Thank you for your understanding and assistance in all our mutual school problems.

In August 1966, the Wilcox County school system was placed under court order to desegregate immediately.

Sixty-six Negro students applied for transfer to white schools in 1966-67. However, only 21 of these students were admitted to the traditionally white schools. In January 1965, the U.S. District Court ordered the Wilcox County Board of Education to admit additional Negro pupils to predominantly white schools in the county. The order referred specifically to the 66 Negro students who had applied for transfer in August, directing that any of these students who were denied transfers and still wished to transfer should be permitted to do so. The Judge noted that only 11 Negroes were currently enrolled in white schools of the county, although 21 had been approved by the School Board in September 1966.

Nine of the transferred Negro students in September 1966 were admitted to Wilcox County High School. On December 23, 1966, a field worker for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Wilcox County wrote to the U.S. Department of Justice, reporting the continuous physical harassment of the transferred Negro high school students:

> Following is an accounting of various incidents (not conclusive) that have occurred primarily within the confines of the Wilcox County high school since September 23, 1966. . . .
>
> All of the Negro high school students have stated that the butts of closed knives have been used as weapons against them. They have been hit in the nose and in the back by white male students using knife butts. Cigarette lighters have also been used against the Negro students as weapons with which to hit them.
>
> [A female student] received an extensive bloody nose from a cigarette lighter and was sent to the principal's office by her classroom teacher. The male who hit her was not reprimanded by the teacher. In this specific instance the classroom teacher turned her back and stated that she did not see the incident. [This student] has also been hit on the leg with a sharp rock which has left a permanent scar. In another specific instance she received an 88 on an examination. Several students told her that if their grades were lower than an 88 that she would receive a beating. Several students did receive grades below 88, and [the student] received a rather serious beating from them. This attack was led by [a male white student]. . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> [A male high school student] has also been beaten numerous times. On his first attempt to eat in the dining hall, he had milk and food thrown on him and was threatened and "called names." Other Negro students are afraid to and do not eat in the school dining hall.
>
> [Two male students] have been beaten in the restroom. Therefore, they attempt to use the rest room during times when it is fairly empty which, during the day, poses a considerable problem. . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> Regarding the four elementary school students, some have been beaten by other elementary school students, but they have been beaten by high school male students. . . . The . . . actions have all occurred in the presence of classroom teachers who will often turn their backs or, on occasion, have told the Negro students that "we can't watch you all the time." On one specific occasion a Negro parent . . . witnessed a white boy beating [Negro male student] after school. A white city policeman observed the incident and said nothing.
>
> In terms of classroom structure, Negro students are forced to sit by themselves in one corner of a classroom apart from the white students and are ignored by the teachers. Hence, although the school is integrated, classroom segregation has been maintained.

> The incidents described in this report can be multiplied. The Negro parents of Wilcox County, Alabama perceive that there is a systematic pattern of intimidation that has developed in order to force the nine Negro students to withdraw from the newly integrated school.
>
> Finally, the students indicated that the extreme brutality has been directed against them by a core of approximately 40 students. [Three named male white students] have been most active in this group.
>
> However, some white youngsters have been friendly but have been intimidated by other whites and are reluctant to structure a friendship with the Negro students.
>
> . . . .
>
> During the early part of the school year both [the principal of the Wilcox County High School and the superintendent of schools] were contacted regarding the physical harassment, and they indicated that they would attempt to bring a halt to this behavior. However, during the past two weeks the harassment has increased.
>
> . . . .
>
> We request that your office seek to place an injunction on the school officials of Wilcox County, Alabama, requiring them to provide protection for Negro students and to explore the possibility of withholding Federal school funds if such harassment continues.

Representatives of the Justice Department did go to Wilcox County and inquire about this problem, but apparently there was no follow-up federal action on the SCLC report. The physical abuse of the Negro students in Wilcox County High School was permitted to continue to such an extent that it did succeed in forcing out the three male Negro high school students, who since January 1967 have attended a Negro high school.

Testimony received by the NEA Special Committee substantiated the SCLC report. Although physical harassment of the remaining Negro students at Wilcox County High School has abated somewhat since the withdrawal of the male students, it still continues; and there are such incidents as the tearing up of the girl students' books, shoving against them in the halls, and "name-calling."

Throughout all of this, the most severe form of punishment meted out to the offending white students has been the suspension of one boy for one day.

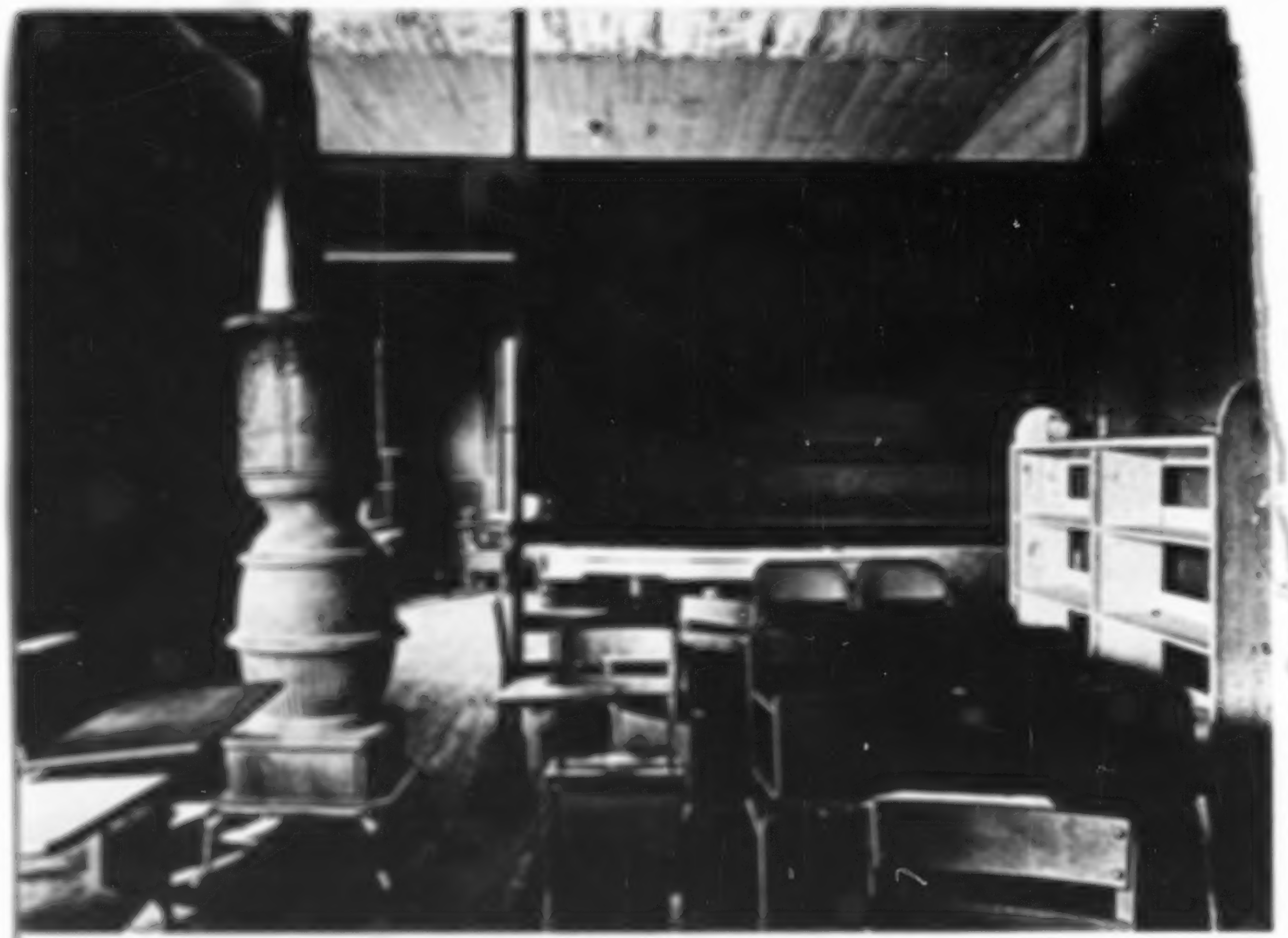
The superintendent assured the co-chairmen of the Special Committee, however, that if any further incident occurred, one particular white boy—a ringleader, new to Wilcox County and with "a bad record"—would be expelled. This, he stated, was recorded in the Board minutes.

IN-SCHOOL SEGREGATION. There is almost complete in-school segregation of the transferred students. The NEA Special Committee heard testimony indicating that they are not allowed to use the school library or to participate in any extracurricular activities; and because of fear of what will happen to them if they try, they choose not to eat in the school cafeteria. Their exclusion from the school library means that no library facilities are available to the Negro students, since the public library is reportedly off limits to Negro citizens of Wilcox County.

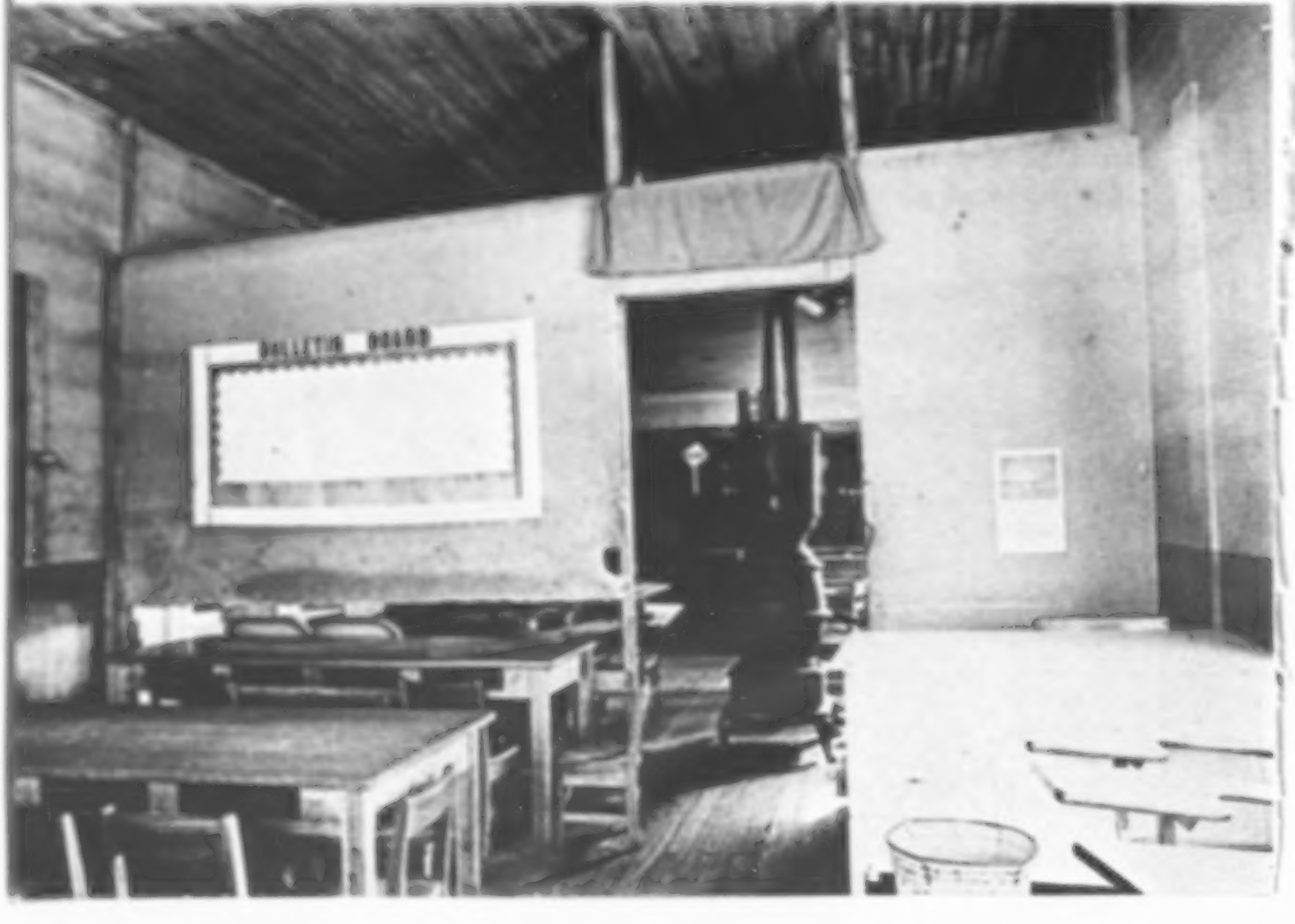
The Special Committee was told of a homecoming day parade that was held during 1966-67. In order to maintain racial segregation among the spectators, the teachers in the high school locked the classroom door on the two Negro high school girls. They were required to remain there while the festivities were in progress—that is, until the father of one of them learned about it and came to the school, obtained the classroom door key, and took them home.

FACULTY SEGREGATION. As of 1967, there has been no faculty desegregation in Wilcox County schools, nor as this report is being prepared, has there been evidence of any intention on the part of Wilcox County school officials to plan for faculty desegregation. During his two years with Wilcox County schools, the superintendent has shown little inclination to meet with the Negro teachers association on any occasion for any purpose. Following the teacher dismissals in August 1965, the Wilcox County Teachers Association repeatedly requested a meeting with the superintendent to discuss the dismissals and the other concerns that have been reported here. Not until May 1966 did the superintendent agree to meet with the Association. He left this meeting in apparent anger, the Special Committee was told, when Association members began to question him about the firing of the teachers.

It was also reported that the superintendent of schools had been in office for almost a full school year before he ventured into any Negro school. In May 1966, he went to Negro schools, accompanying a photographer who took pictures to be used in the desegregation suit.



Elementary Classrooms at Lower Peach Tree School. "Two classrooms are divided into four by the use of two partial partitions . . . in cold weather two groups burn up and the other two groups freeze . . ."



The Students' Charges

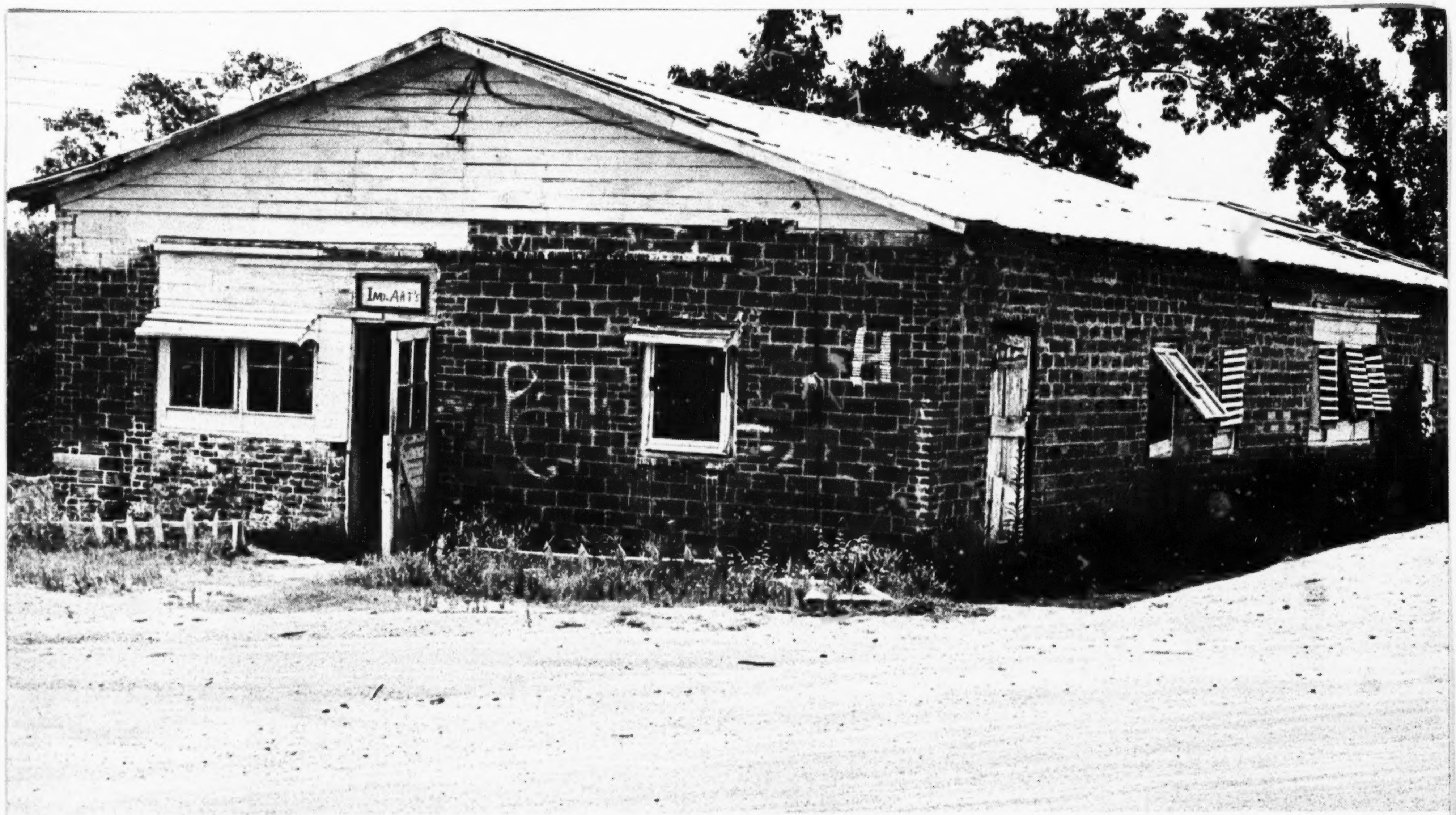
> Some years ago our parents were advised to buy some land upon which would be built a high school. Our parents gave fish fries and Saturday night jukes and bought the land and deeded it to the state and county. A school building was built for us which was not as good as some people's barn. The condition of the building is bad.
>
> 1. The floor is of cement, hard to keep clean.
> 2. The walls are unpainted.
> 3. No science room.
> 4. No gym.
> 5. No library.
> 6. No suitable toilet facilities.
> 7. No place to wash hands for lunch.
> 8. No decent drinking fountain.
> 9. Two of our classrooms have no heater at all.
> 10. The grounds needs landscaping, it looks more like a sawmill.
> 11. We have poor bus service, they are always broken down.
> 12. Classrooms are overcrowded.
> 13. We have to make our own fires and sweep our own floors daily.
> 14. Poor classroom facilities.
>
> Come and see for yourselves.
>
> The Students of Lower Peach Tree High School

Some months before the NEA preliminary staff inquiry in Wilcox County, the staff member who became coordinator of this study did go to Lower Peach Tree High School and see for himself that the students' description of conditions in their school was accurate. Subsequent investigation by the NEA Special Committee has revealed that if the students erred at all, it was on the side of understatement.

The School Plant

Staff members of the Alabama State Department of Education made a survey of Wilcox County Schools in 1963-64, and their subsequent report had this to say about Lower Peach Tree School:

> The Lower Peach Tree School has a six-classrooms and lunchroom concrete block building on a 15-acre site which has not been developed. There is a four-room frame building, which houses six teachers and about 175 pupils. This elementary situation is intolerable and there is barely room for children to be seated. Two classrooms are divided into four by the use of two partial partitions. There are flues for only two stoves and in cold weather two groups burn up and the other two freeze. . . .[43]



Industrial Arts Building at Camden Academy. "Recommended for abandonment in 1964 . . ."

Athletic Field and "Bleachers" at Camden Academy

The State Department of Education survey team recommended the abandonment of Lower Peach Tree High School in 1964, along with six other Negro schools and one white school.[44] Lower Peach Tree High School still remains open, although the Board of Education in 1966 received four letters signed by 67 parents requesting that their children be transferred to Pine Hill High School (white).[45]

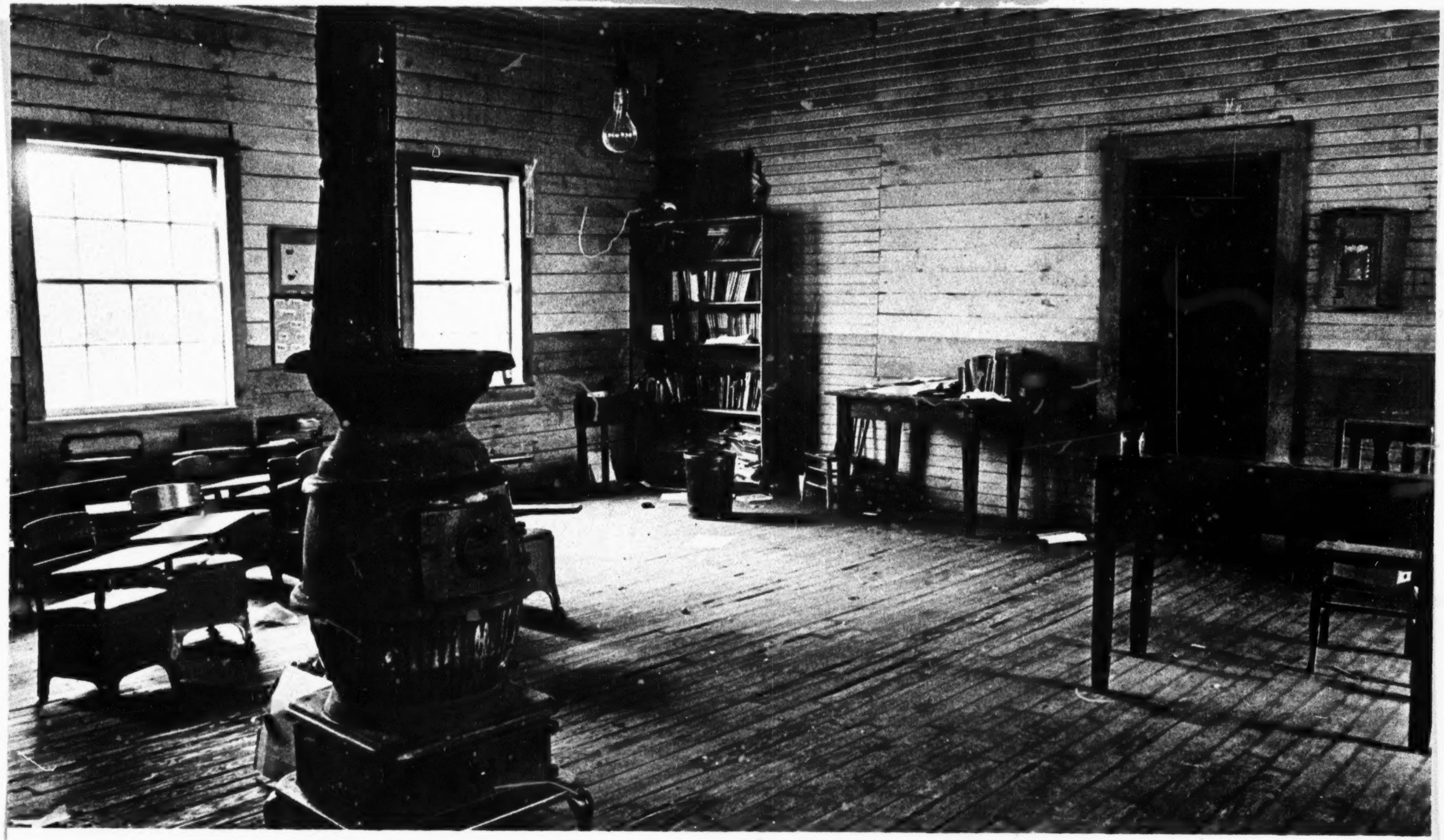
Lower Peach Tree High School is not the only school with buildings classified by the state department of education survey team as too deficient to be salvageable. Among buildings recommended for abandonment in 1964 and still in use are the industrial arts building at Camden Academy, the elementary and athletic building at Snow Hill Institute, and the second classroom building at Tates Chapel Junior High School.

Value of School Buildings

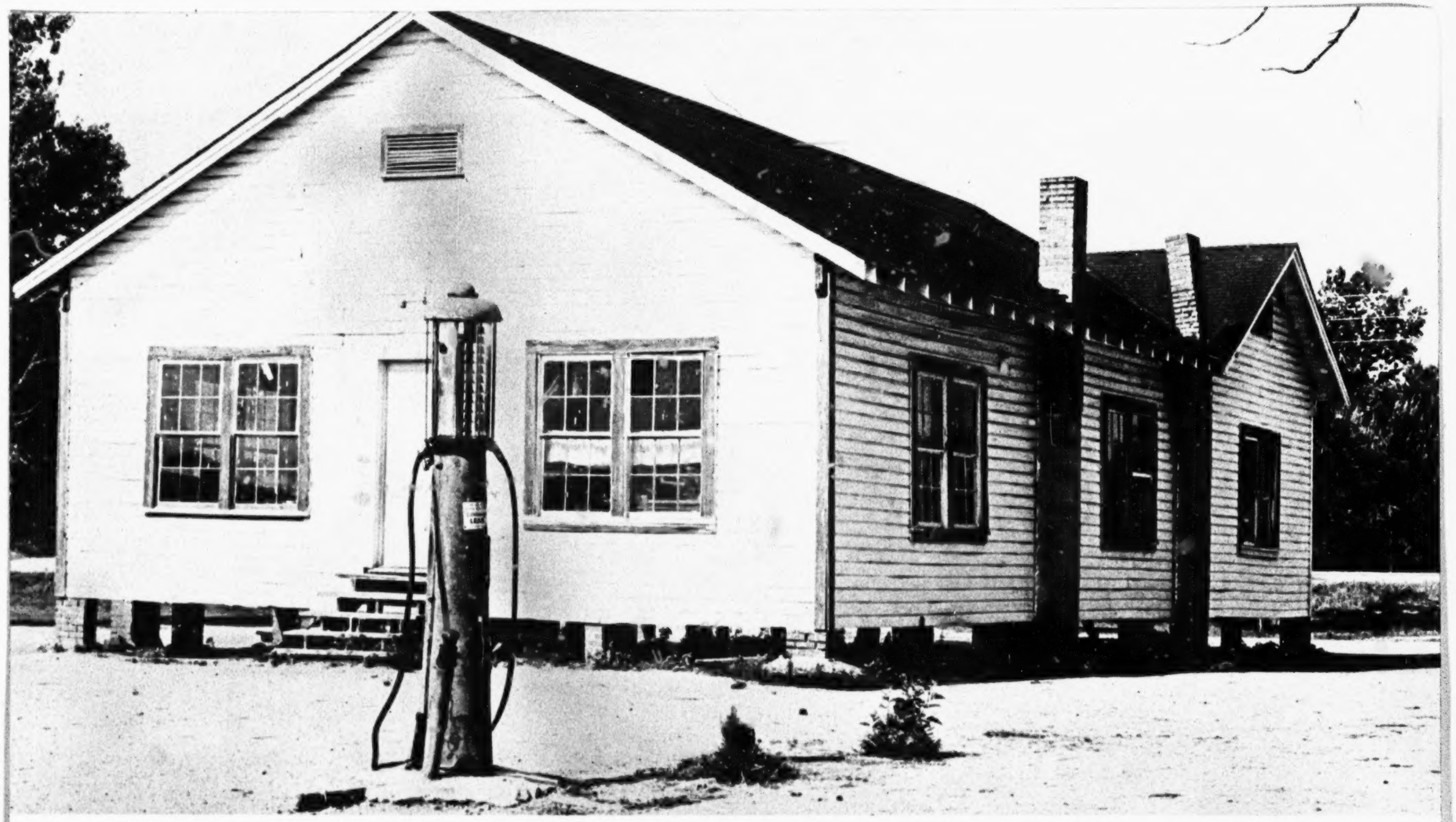
Insurance inspection reports show that as of 1965-66, the total value of school buildings and contents in Wilcox County was $980,100. The per pupil value of the white school buildings was $767.08; the per pupil value of the Negro schools was $221.64.[46] No buildings have been constructed in the county since 1965.

> Symbols of a Negro school in Wilcox County are: Potbellied stoves, broken windows, outdoor toilets, grassless play areas, bare bulb lighting, and wood frame or concrete block classroom buildings—in need of paint.
>
> Not one of these features is present in white schools except for broken windows, which are promptly replaced.
>
> Similarly, the white schools bear identifying characteristics—landscaped grounds, brick veneer buildings, gymnasiums, fluorescent lighting, student lockers—that appear at all of the white schools but few of the Negro schools.
>
> . . . .
>
> Each white school has a gym and a separate auditorium. Only one Negro school, Annie Manie (owned by United Presbyterian Church), has separate facilities. The gyms at Snow Hill and at Wilcox County Training School (both Negro schools) have ceilings low enough to block an arching shot at the basket.
>
> Boykin, Lower Peach Tree, and Camden Academy (the largest school in the county) have no gym at all.[47]

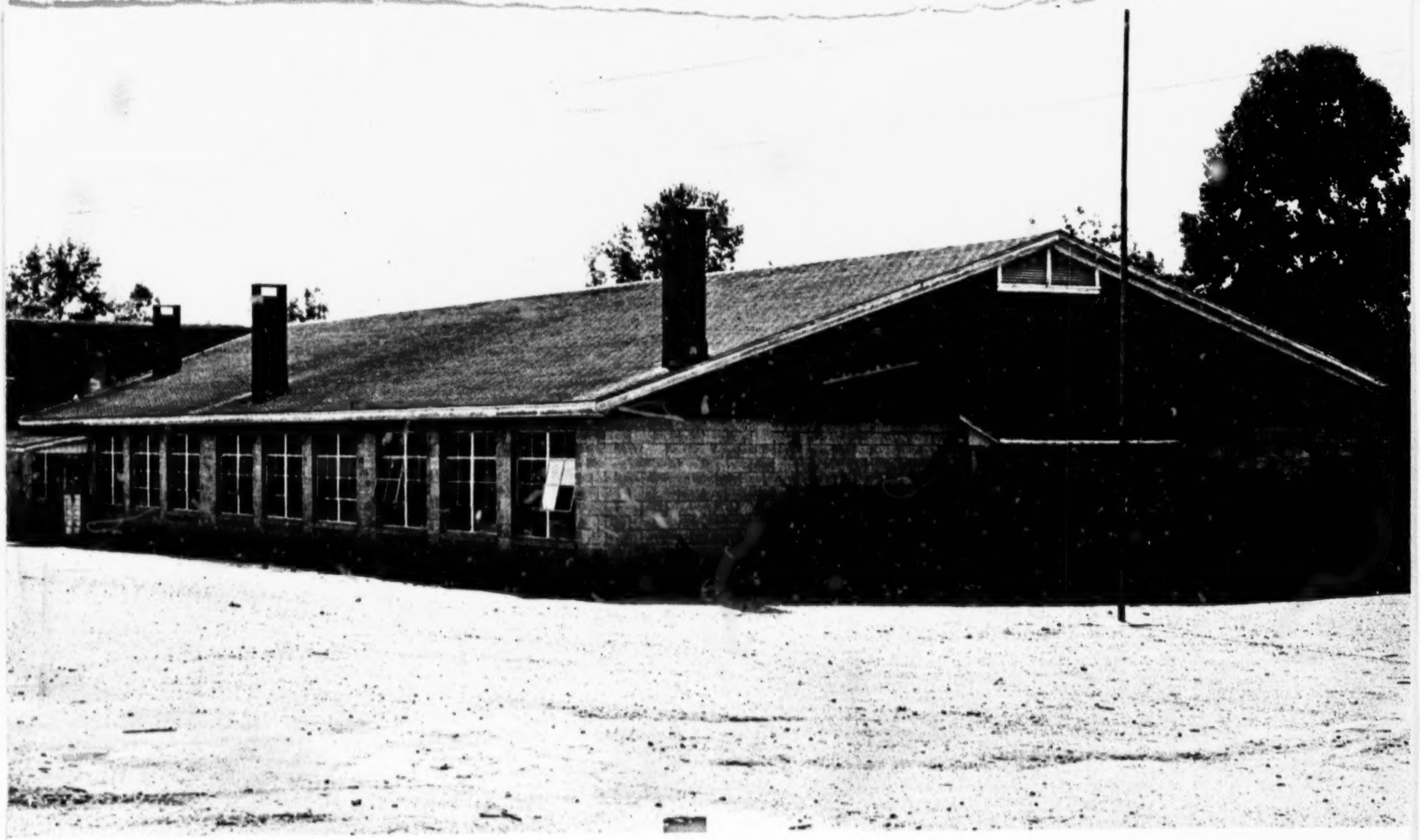
SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PLANS. A school construction bond issue was passed in Alabama in 1965. The bonds were issued, and $500,000 of school construction moneys was made available to Wilcox County. The present superintendent of schools told the NEA preliminary inquiry team in May 1966 that a school construction and rehabilitation program would



Symbols of a Negro School in Wilcox County . . . "Potbellied Stoves and Bare Bulb Lighting . . ."
Elementary Classroom at Snow Hill Institute



Symbols of a Negro School in Wilcox County . . . "Broken Windows . . . wood frame buildings . . ."
Elementary Building at Lower Peach Tree School



Symbols of a Negro School in Wilcox County . . . "Broken Windows . . . Concrete Block Buildings . . . Grassless Play Areas . . ."
Lower Peach Tree High School Building

be started prior to the beginning of the 1966-67 school year. Although it has now been two years since passage of the bond issue and more than a year since allocation of the school construction moneys to Wilcox County, school building plans in the county are still only in the planning stage. The superintendent outlined these plans to the co-chairmen of the Special Committee when they met with him in March 1967. He stated that one elementary facility (attached to W. J. Jones High School, enrolling Negro students) is to be replaced by a new elementary building; that Prairie Elementary School (Negro) will be abandoned and the students transferred to Wilcox County Training School (Negro); that improvements are planned for Camden Academy (Negro); and that Annie Manie and Lower Peach Tree High Schools (Negro) will be replaced by a new building, and the enrollments of these two schools consolidated. The superintendent's building and consolidation plans did not include any stated reference to further school desegregation as a part of the consolidation effort.

Extracurricular Duties of Students

The testimony of Lower Peach Tree students and of teachers in this and other schools indicated that the students and teachers help to subsidize the Wilcox County school system, not only through donation of instructional materials and facilities, but also through enforced donation of services.

Lower Peach Tree students reported that the classrooms are cold when they arrive in the morning and that they have to build their own fires and sweep their own floors. They said that the school does have a janitor, but that he is paid only $38 a month for janitorial services and also drives the school bus, making two trips each morning and evening. The time he has to spend on janitorial tasks is extremely limited, and what he does not do, the students and teachers must do or it does not get done at all.

Observations of the NEA Special Committee's co-chairmen gave evidence that the Board of Education provides little, if any, more in the way of janitorial services in other Negro schools than it does in Lower Peach Tree. Their impressions are supported by the 1966-67 school budget for Wilcox County, which shows a per pupil expenditure for janitors' wages of $2.63 in white schools and $1.35 in Negro schools. For janitorial supplies, the school system budgeted $0.74 per white student and $0.26 per Negro student. No allocation for janitors' wages or supplies was made to the two Negro elementary schools or to two of the Negro junior high schools.

CAFETERIA DUTY. In Lower Peach Tree school, the students do the cooking and a teacher supervises the food preparation and service, in addition to providing some of the food that is served. Some foods and milk are provided to the school system under the federal lunch supplement; however, few free lunches are provided in the county-owned schools, except to the students who work in the cafeteria. The teacher in charge of the cafeteria, the students said, has to be in and out of her classroom throughout the morning; the period before lunch is a free period for her class in order to give her time to work with food service. The students who have cafeteria duty (on a rotating basis) have to leave the classroom for one hour before lunch and approximately one and one-half hours after lunch. The time lost in classroom work is never made up. However, the time spent on cafeteria duty at Lower Peach Tree High School may not be a total loss, since the school provides no home economics course for the students. Similarly, the only vocational training offered the male students at Lower Peach Tree is their on-the-job training to sweep floors and build fires. This is the only high school in the county that has neither a vocational agriculture nor a home economics course.

LIGHTS, WATER, AND TELEPHONE. The foregoing summations of the charges by students and teachers of Wilcox County, even without a detailed study of the curricular inadequacies that were reported, would have covered, one would think, every conceivable form of educational deprivation. However, the 1966-67 school budget for Wilcox County reveals further deficiencies in the operations budget of the Negro schools. The school operations budget shows an allocation of $3.87 per white student and $1.23 per Negro student for lights and water. No allocation for lights and water is made to two of the elementary schools. Teachers and principals told the NEA Special Committee that the amount apportioned to Negro schools for this purpose is frequently insufficient to pay the utility bills and that the individual schools have to raise the money to make up the difference. Another item in the school budget indicates that allocations for telephone service are made to only two of the Negro schools in Wilcox County.

School Financial Resource in Wilcox County

The Per Pupil Investment

The vast disparity between the traditionally white and Negro schools of Wilcox County is not between good schools and poor schools; it is between poor schools and poorer schools. The educational investment in this county is insufficient to provide adequate schooling for any of its students.

- The total amount of the Wilcox County school budget for 1966-67 was $1,421,333. Even if the moneys were allocated equitably (and the evidence of the preceding section shows that they are not), the per pupil expenditure in this county could be no more than $286 for the 4,963 pupils in average daily attendance.

  The national average expenditure per pupil in 1966-67 was $564—almost twice the average amount spent on a child attending school in Wilcox County.
- School districts in Alabama averaged only $390 per pupil in 1966-67, placing the state 46th in the nation; even this low state average was $110 more than the average amount spent on a child attending school in Wilcox County.
- While both state and national education expenditures have shown a marked upward trend, the public school investment in Wilcox County has remained almost static during recent years. In 1963-64, Wilcox County's per pupil expenditure was $270—only $10 less than the state average of $280. Since 1963-64, Alabama's per pupil expenditure has increased by more than 28 percent; the increase in Wilcox County has been only 5 percent.

Thus, measured by the national or even by the state averages in dollar investment per pupil, Wilcox County is not furnishing the necessary financial support for even a minimal school program. The Wilcox County school system appears to be past the brink of educational bankruptcy.

The State Minimum Program for Public Education

Despite the fact that state funds supply approximately 78 percent of the nonfederal revenues for public elementary and secondary schools in Alabama, the uneven distribution of wealth among its various localities is such that the state has had only minimal success in attempting to bridge the gap between the income and educational needs of local school districts. The gap between income and need is particularly glaring in the rural Black Belt counties like Wilcox where the land is undervalued, underassessed, and underdeveloped; where the majority of the population is poor; and where even the meager sources of tax revenue available are underutilized.

The bulk of state funds for public education in Alabama is distributed under the Minimum Program Fund, through which effort has been made to establish certain basic educational standards in all local school districts. Four factors are involved in the determination of the Minimum Program Fund allocation to a local district: (1) teachers' salaries, (2) transportation, (3) other current operating expenses, and (4) capital outlay. State Minimum Program funds are derived from two sources:

Alabama Special Educational Trust Fund (comprising 95.5 percent of MFP in 1965), supported by revenues from 13 earmarked taxes. In 1965, the state sales and use tax provided 61 percent; the state income tax, 28.8 percent; the tobacco tax, 6.8 percent; other taxes and receipts, 3.4 percent.

Public School Fund (comprising 4.5 percent of MFP in 1965), supported by revenues from statewide three-mill property tax.

SCHOOL FINANCE SURPLUSES AMIDST POVERTY. Between 1965 and 1967, $6,946,751 of surplus revenues derived from taxes earmarked for public education in Alabama were spent for other than public school purposes. More than half of this, $3,750,000, was appropriated for private school tuition grants to students unwilling to attend desegregating public schools.[48]

There are in Alabama at least nine poverty-stricken school districts other than Wilcox in which even a small share of this money could have gone a long way in alleviating conditions of critical educational need.

The state surplus in educational funds occurs because of a built-in legislative device that works in the following way. Prior to consideration of its biennial school appropriation, the Alabama legislature receives an estimate of the school revenues that should be produced. If the estimate of revenue exceeds the income from the tax sources and the appropriation has been based on the estimate, proration occurs. This means a curtailment of the state school allocation to conform to the actual income during the biennium. If, on the other hand, the revenue estimate is a conservative one, a surplus results. No part of the surplus may be used for public schools unless it is appropriated by legislative enactment.

A recent report of the Alabama Education Association indicates that the diversion of Educational Trust Fund surpluses to the support of other than public educational functions has become an increasingly common practice in Alabama:

> Unfortunately, actions by the Legislature in recent sessions have resulted in record amounts being appropriated to private schools and to

> functions unrelated to the learning process. These appropriations were justified by pointing to the tremendous progress being made by the public schools. It should be remembered by teachers and laymen that recent advances have not brought public education in Alabama to the point that funds can be spared to support private schools and other services.[49]

In 1966, the Alabama legislature enacted a bill declaring null and void all school desegregation agreements with the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and prohibiting voluntary compliance by the local districts with HEW's desegregation Guidelines. State officials assured local school boards that they would be granted supplementary appropriations from surpluses in the Special Educational Trust Fund to compensate for any loss in federal funds resulting from their refusal to comply with the 1966 Guidelines for desegregation under the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

The Alabama Education Association opposed both the anti-Guidelines legislation and the plan for using school fund surpluses to assist school districts that lost federal funds. In its August 1966 testimony at the hearings, the AEA stated seven reasons for its position. Among these were the following:

> (4) The proposed legislation is opposed because it violates the established procedure by which public school systems receive funds through the Minimum Foundation Program. This program was established by law for the expressed purpose of providing a fair and equitable way to allocate funds because of a school system's refusal to comply with desegregation guidelines, the amount of funds being that lost in federal funds. Such a procedure is completely foreign to the concept of the MFP which is, simply stated, taxing wealth where it exists and spending it for the children where they are.
>
> . . . .
>
> (7) Replacing federal funds with state funds, in effect, costs double. If, for example, Alabama loses $40 million in federal funds and allocates $40 million from state funds, a total of $80 million is necessary to do what $40 million could have done. Such an arrangement is especially unsound in a state which through the years has been unable to finance its schools at a high level and which is now making a determined effort to support its public schools at a level which will enable them to compare more favorably with those throughout the region and nation.

The executive secretary of the Alabama State Teachers Association also testified against the proposed anti-Guidelines legislation. Included in the ASTA testimony were the following statements:

> . . . This piece of legislation violates the concept of local control and curtails the autonomy of the local school boards in Alabama. Section 1

of the proposed legislation says in part "that any compliance agreement or assurance made or given by a local county or city board of education is null and void and shall have no binding effect." This wording indicates the loss of local autonomy and permits the Governor's Commission to seize control of local school boards at will. This is highly unreasonable in a society which advocates freedom of thought and expression and equal educational opportunities for all.

. . . .

[Referring to the section of the anti-Guidelines bill which declared that the state would provide compensation to school districts for federal funds lost through refusal to comply with the 1966 Guidelines for desegregation, but which provided that the state funds would be provided in compensation for only those "federal financial assistance programs which were in existence *prior* to the adoption of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965":]

As we interpret this legislation, this bill provides for the State of Alabama to reimburse local school systems for federal funds in existence prior to the adoption of [and therefore not including] the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. . . . If this interpretation is correct, does not this bill deceive the people of Alabama in that one section says that the state will make up such funds lost due to failure or refusal to abide by the guidelines and yet omits the section which in essence supports the guidelines?

. . . .

There are nearly one million Negro Alabamians watching this committee and the Legislature as this bill moves along the legislative calendar. These are not so-called "outside agitators." These are the *inside citizens* who like most other Alabamians desire that this state not limit herself to the narrow walls of racial politics, but elevate herself to the path of economic prosperity, educational achievement, and racial equality.

There are those who say that the Negro is getting his fair share of democracy in Alabama and that this legislation has nothing to do with race. We are mindful that no language of this bill refers to race, but we cannot escape the bare fact that race is the central factor. . . . When one recalls what the guidelines require, the whole question is centered on the Negro—students and teachers. To wit, the requirement that race no longer be a factor in assigning public school personnel and students.

Inequities in the Tax Structure

In 1957, the Alabama legislature directed the establishment of the Alabama Education Commission to conduct a study of public education and educational support in the state. In 1959, the Commission issued a report of its two-year study. Among the school finance recommendations was that the state sales tax be increased from 3 to 4 percent—a measure that has since been implemented.

Six members of the Commission issued minority reports taking issue with some of the Commission's school finance recommendations. Three of the dissenting members expressed the view that the state was already placing far too heavy a reliance on direct consumer taxes and insufficient emphasis on the taxation of business, industry, and public utilities:

> The proposals of the Commission go too far, we think, in levying new taxes on the low income segment of our population and not far enough in establishing that corporations and other forms of business enterprise assume a fair and reasonable share of increased educational costs. . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> Business taxes currently provide only 11 percent of state tax revenues and business enterprises enjoy low income rates and sales tax exemptions which are not usually granted to business in surrounding states. Millions of dollars of additional revenue could be gained by changes in the tax laws of Alabama that now grant business a privileged tax position.
>
> . . . in recent years . . . direct consumer taxes have increased materially whereas business, public utilities, and general property taxes have actually decreased in the percentage of the total tax-take of the state. I am for the industrial growth of this state and would not like to see anything done which would hinder the industrial growth. . . . However, there are other southern states which, industrially, are growing, faster than the state of Alabama and yet, industry and corporations are bearing their equal load of increased taxation. Thus, it seems that an equal increase of taxes in other states upon corporations and industry has not hindered the industrial growth of those states.

THE "DEVALUATION" OF PROPERTY FOR TAX PURPOSES. Although the State of Alabama has on its books a statute which calls for assessment of property at 60 percent of its fair and reasonable market value, that law has little or no effect on the actual taxing practice.

- In 1964-65, the evaluation of property for tax purposes in Alabama averaged no more than 18.6 percent of market value, comparing with a national average of 29 percent.[50] The assessment ratios of 32 states were more in line with fair cash value than Alabama's.*
- The extension of exemptions to corporate and individual owners of large land holdings and the unrealistic assessment practices of the publicly elected tax assessors have so eroded the property tax base that in 1965 ad valorem tax proceeds provided only 18 percent of the total tax revenues of the state and local governments in Alabama. No other state derived such a small percentage of its tax revenues from property assessments.

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* The local effort charge exacted of Alabama school districts to participate in the state Minimum Foundation Program is based on the revenues produced by a 5-mill tax rate on *1938* property assessments.

The per capita property tax collection in Alabama averages $25, compared with a national per capita average of $114; again the state is placed last in the nation.

LOCAL SCHOOL REVENUES IN WILCOX COUNTY. In 1966-67, the local share of school support in Wilcox County was .04 percent of the $1,421,233 school budget, or just $13 per pupil. Local property taxes produced a total of $66,000 for operation of the 16 Wilcox County schools. During the same year, the United Presbyterian Church spent $65,000 in the three schools which it still owns.

With most of the land tied up in low grade pasturage and timber acreage assessed at values that might have been realistic 50 years ago, and with most of the people living at bare subsistence levels—landless and intermittently jobless—it is obvious, even if maximum tax rates were applied and all tax resources utilized, that Wilcox County could not increase local revenues sufficiently to provide an acceptable educational program. A liberalization of tax policies would be at most a beginning of constructive change. But even a beginning of change is not now in sight.

When maximum tax rates are not applied, all available state and federal revenue sources cannot be utilized. Insufficient financial ability is matched and, in fact, perpetuated by lack of vision on the part of those who determine fiscal and educational policy in Wilcox County.

Specifically: The Alabama constitution permits for school purposes a maximum ad valorem tax of up to 12 mills without a referendum (3 mills district tax; 9 mills county tax). In Wilcox County, where the total tax rate is only 7 mills (3 mills district tax; 4 mills county tax), the school board could increase its local funds to $88,000 simply by utilizing the five additional mills permitted by state law.

By enactment of a local bill in the legislature—which, in effect, requires only the agreement of the local legislative delegates for passage—school districts may impose a variety of nonproperty taxes. Countywide sales and gasoline taxes provide approximately 32 percent of local school district revenues in Alabama. But in Wilcox County the only local nonproperty tax applied for school purposes is the poll tax, the constitutionality of which is in question.

FEDERAL FUNDS. Although local and state revenues combined were insufficient to provide more than token public education in Wilcox County, school officials in 1965-66 forfeited hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal education moneys because of noncompliance with the federal Guidelines for school desegregation.

With the beginning of school year 1966-67, however, the school system was placed under court order to desegregate, and thereby became eligible to receive federal funds. Under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, an allocation of $533,537 was made to Wilcox County. However, as of March 1967, the Wilcox County school system had actually spent only $81,000—about 15 percent of its Title I funds. By this same date, Macon County—also a Black Belt county—had received project approval for $444,000 of its $494,978 Title I allocation. Included in the Macon County proposal were the establishment of remedial reading classes, a free lunch program, health services, counseling, library acquisitions, and school construction plans.

When the co-chairmen of the NEA Special Committee met with the Wilcox County superintendent in March 1967, they learned that the major use of Title I funds in the county so far had been to place television sets in every school and to purchase such items as film projectors, record players, duplicating machines, calculators, and typewriters.

The Committee found no evidence that teachers had been consulted in the development of Title I proposals. Many have not known what to request for their schools because little, if any, information has been provided them concerning the kinds of programs that are fundable under the Act. Materials have been sent to the schools without prior determination of the most pressing educational needs of the students and teachers. Workshops and information programs have not been instituted to assist school personnel in the most effective use of the materials that have been supplied.

The superintendent of schools informed the Special Committee co-chairman that he had recently employed a new staff member to be in charge of federal programs. The NEA Special Committee received information which indicated that this individual lacks both the training and experience in the field of education that would enable him to function in this important area in such a way as to ensure maximum educational benefits from the tax dollars expended.

School Leadership Resource in Wilcox County

The classroom teachers of Wilcox County are on their own, with little, if any, supervision or support from the central administration. The principals are virtually autonomous within their own buildings, also operating without consultative assistance or supervision. The students are without the specialized educational, psychological, and health services that are essential in any school system, but particularly so in an area where the majority of children, bearing the physical and emotional scars of extreme poverty and racial isolation, have no hope of receiving these necessary services in their homes or anywhere else outside the school system.

The absence of effective administration, supervision, and specialized personnel was noted by the NEA Special Committee as a grave obstacle to the efficient and productive operation of Wilcox County schools.

For 16 schools, approximately 212 classroom teachers and principals, and an enrollment of 5,130 pupils, the Wilcox County system employs the following staff members assigned to the district at large or to the central administrative office:

County superintendent
County attendance supervisor *
Transportation supervisor
Secretary
Custodian and bookkeeper

Recently, according to the superintendent, the system has added two employees to this list: a school nurse and the coordinator of federal programs.

There are no curriculum supervisors, no counselors or guidance workers, no remedial teachers or special teachers for physically and mentally handicapped students, no teacher aides, no business manager or administrative assistant to the superintendent, and no administrative and insufficient clerical assistance to the building principals; in half of the schools, the principals also have teaching duties.

It is the NEA Special Committee's understanding that allocations for supervisory and other auxiliary school personnel are not a part of the state's Minimum Program Fund. Obviously, with local property tax revenues

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* Evidence presented in the Wilcox County school desegregation suit indicates that the school system does employ an attendance worker. Also, a list of "school officers" provided the Special Committee includes the name of an "attendance supervisor."

amounting to only $66,000,* Wilcox County cannot afford the supervisory and specialized personnel that would permit effective utilization of the small school staff that is currently employed or would ensure maximum educational benefits from the small investment that has been made in its schools. The Wilcox County school system is too poor to be economical.

THE NEED FOR SCHOOL REORGANIZATION. The Wilcox County school system is not organized for maximum economy or efficiency or educational productivity. Not one of the 16 school centers in the county has a large enough enrollment to justify the teachers and supportive staff essential to a well-rounded program of curricular offerings and school services.

It is widely recognized by educational authorities that school size bears a direct, crucial relationship to quality of educational program and economy of school operation. Most reliable educational research indicates that the smaller the school, the higher the cost per pupil for provision of adequate educational offerings. According to most commonly accepted standards, a regular three-year high school should contain an absolute minimum of 100 pupils in grade 12. The recommended *minimum* enrollments are 375 pupils for a three-year high school and 750 for a six-year high school.[51]

Not one of the seven high school centers in Wilcox County approaches these enrollment sizes. In 1965, Camden Academy, the largest school in the county, enrolled 235 pupils in grades 7 through 9, and 251 pupils in 10 through 12. Its twelfth-grade enrollment was 79. The next largest school, Annie Manie, enrolled a total of 152 in grades 10 through 12, 46 of whom were in grade 12. The other schools varied in high school enrollment from 30 (Moore Academy, predominantly white enrollment) to 130 (Wilcox County High School, predominantly white). Moore Academy enrolled 8 students in grade 12.

The extent of the problem of small schools in Alabama and throughout the South is indicated in the report of a 1966 survey of Southern high schools conducted by the Center for Southern Education Studies of George Peabody College for Teachers. The report shows that 80.8 percent of the high schools in Alabama enroll fewer than 100 pupils in the twelfth grade and that this is true of 86.9 percent of schools in the 11 Southern states.[52]

Although most prevalent in the South, small school centers are a barrier to good education in many rural areas throughout the nation. Conant, in *The American High School Today*, emphasizes the seriousness of this problem:

> The enrollment of many American public high schools is too small to allow a diversified curriculum except at exorbitant expense. The

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* Including poll tax revenues and rentals, the total amount of local school funds in Wilcox County during 1966-67 was $71,000.

> prevalence of such high schools—those with graduating classes of less than one hundred students—constitutes one of the serious obstacles to good secondary education throughout most of the United States. I believe that such schools are not in a position to provide a satisfactory education for any group of their students—the academically talented, the vocationally oriented, or the slow reader. The instructional program is neither sufficiently broad nor sufficiently challenging. A small high school cannot by its very nature offer a comprehensive curriculum. Furthermore, such a school uses uneconomically the time and efforts of administrators, teachers, and specialists, the shortage of whom is a serious national problem.[53]

Conant acknowledges that small high schools are necessary in some parts of the United States where the population is so sparsely distributed that enough pupils cannot be effectively transported to a central point. He refers, however, to school consolidation experiences in some of the wide-open spaces of Texas and other rural Far West regions to suggest what can be done to eliminate the small high school even in remote rural areas:

> I visited a school which was drawing pupils from approximately three thousand square miles; many of the children had a bus ride of an hour and a half each way. A balance must be struck between the benefits derived from education in a high school of sufficient size and the deleterious effects of a long bus ride to and from school each day. Geography may sometimes be legitimate justification for a small high school, but all too often it is merely an excuse. Human nature—not geography—offers the real explanation.[54]

Compared to 3,000 square miles served by the consolidated school mentioned by Dr. Conant, Wilcox County's distance problem seems slight. The county covers a total land area of 900 square miles.

The Peabody report, which recommends 500 to 1,500 pupils as an optimum size range for a standard high school, places the responsibility for acceleration of school consolidation and reorganization efforts directly on the shoulders of state educational leadership:

> State leadership is the key to achieving desirable school system reorganization . . . when sound school system reorganization has been effected, the state should then compel the establishment of adequate school centers through the adoption and enforcement of sound standards governing school programs.
>
> . . . The state cannot justify, as the Southern states do, taking taxes from favored or determined localities to support equalized opportunities elsewhere unless it sets up safeguards to guarantee efficiency, economy, and adequacy in the less favored localities. If the latter kept their poorly educated youth at home, the problem would be less critical; as it is, the mobility of people makes it a matter of state-wide, regional, and even national concern.[55]

Potentials for Change

> Many Negroes of Wilcox County believe that they will continue to receive increasing support from outside for programs designed to improve their economic, educational, and health conditions, as well as their basic personal and civil rights. They seem to be both calm and determined to move ahead . . . determined to break the traditional political and economic controls which have retarded their progress and consequently acquire a larger share of the products and services of the society. As one person said, "We are in the swim—we will go down if we give up now."
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> . . . .
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> The vested interests in a county such as Wilcox wish to retain control. They conclude that total production and income are limited, so hesitate to assist the majority to improve their influence and income. Such attitudes have existed around the world wherever per capita incomes have been limited and population has grown about as rapidly as production.
>
> The recent drives to obtain civil and personal rights by the Negroes have alarmed many whites. Their complacency has been replaced by fear and frequently hate since they are a political minority in the county. Some of the large landowners fear that the Negro majority will obtain control and raise land taxes to finance education and other services. There must be, consequently, many whites who wish to reduce the number of Negroes to a minority; and also who wish to avoid the costs of developing the low-income citizens, both whites and Negroes.
>
> A few whites, among both the business and church leaders, recognize the signs of the times and are willing to cooperate in mutual programs to improve the human element—both the low-income Negro and white. The writer believes that this group will increase in number as there is a better understanding of the potential of the low-income person in production, in increasing the size of the market, and in educational and cultural attainments.[56]

Amidst this varying climate of opinion, significant economic and social changes are taking place in Wilcox County. Some of the changes, at this stage, show little evidence of improving the lot of low-income citizens. Other developments are actively involving at least the Negro community in the provision of social, health, and educational services that have long been neglected by the county and the state. Many whites would like to take advantage of these services but are afraid of the social consequences which may result.

Plans for expansion of the county's industrial potential are being implemented by the landed leadership of Wilcox. They include a $54 million lock and dam development, now in advanced stages of implementation, which for the next few years will continue to demand skilled and unskilled labor; and a $77 million wood products plant moving into Wilcox County, which will require an estimated 1,000 temporary construction workers and eventually will provide some 700 to 800 permanent positions. There is concern in the county that the wood products plant will employ an imported labor supply, partly in conformity with the long-held policy in Wilcox against employment of Negroes in any but the lowliest positions and partly because of the lack of skilled manpower of either race within the county.

While these plans have been in progress for the industrial development of Wilcox County, Negro citizens, with the help of OEO antipoverty funds, have also made progress in implementing programs to develop the human resources of the county. The NEA Special Committee interviewed some of the people who have worked with these programs and learned something of their expectations and the difficulties they have encountered in their antipoverty efforts.

The Antipoverty Program in Wilcox County

> . . . Wilcox County is seen as a pilot community for which a comprehensive program of educational, social, economic, and political restructuring is being developed. Not only federal and state aid projects are being contemplated, but a complex of non-publicly funded programs supported by academic institutions, social development agencies, religious organizations, by private foundations, labor and management constructs, cooperative leagues, and anti-poverty projects is being explored and exploited to this end.
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> (From Application to Office of Economic Opportunity
> for Antipoverty Program in Wilcox County)

Efforts to achieve any component of such a broad-based total action program in Wilcox as that envisaged above have met with powerful official resistance virtually every step of the way at every level of government, including the governor and the Congressional delegation.

Because of this resistance, Wilcox County citizens have been unable to get a Community Action Program (CAP). "The county would like to operate a poverty program," one person commented, "but they want to operate it on their own terms; if they cannot operate it that way, they do not want it operated at all." The requirements of Economic Opportunity legislation—participation of the poor "to the maximum feasible extent" on the CAP policy-making body and nonsegregation of CAP programs—are in direct contradiction to the terms that Wilcox County officials have in mind.

As of January 4, 1967, 41 other counties in the state had accepted the OEO requirements in order to qualify for CAP grants. But only four of the ten "100 percent poverty" counties,* of which Wilcox is one, had established a Community Action Program at that time. The Committee notes that only five counties with nonwhite majorities have been approved for CAP grants.

SEASONAL AND MIGRANT FARM WORKERS PROGRAM. The antipoverty effort that has been established in Wilcox County is a program for seasonal and migrant farm workers. While not ideally suited to the needs of Wilcox County because it is available only to families who qualify as seasonal farm workers, this was the only OEO program that could be obtained on a regional basis, thus not subject to the governor's veto. But even though the governor's approval was not necessary for the application, his influence delayed issuance of the grant for several months. Although the program was initially funded in June 1966, members of Alabama's Congressional delegation caused the funds to be suspended pending investigation of a charge by the Alabama governor that the grant was being made to "militant civil rights workers" in Wilcox County. After the November 1966 election, when the governor's wife succeeded him in office, the OEO funds were made available to Wilcox County.

THE ECONOMICS OF ANTIPOVERTY. If official opposition had succeeded in scuttling Wilcox County's poverty program, it would have meant a loss to the county of $302,081, the total amount of the grant. The program employs approximately 60 staff members, 90 percent of whom are Wilcox residents. Of the 200 families participating in the adult basic skills course, 195 receive stipends of $30 a week—a total of almost $20,000 a month. In addition, thousands of dollars per month are spent for the supplies and materials that are bought primarily from local merchants. By a conservative estimate, the direct positive impact of this project alone on the business and service industries of Wilcox County is $50,000 a month.

CURRICULUM AND PARTICIPANTS. In addition to the adult basic skills course, the antipoverty project includes a day-care and early childhood education program and a youth enrichment program that provides special skills training for school dropouts and near-dropouts.

Although classes were opened to citizens of either race, no whites have applied for admission. The power of public opinion is too great even for those who want and need to be involved in the program. One person, in an interview with Special Committee members, said, "I have heard a white say to another that he wished he could go to the poverty school. The power structure not only denies the Negro, but the poor whites are being handicapped because of the few whites who have money."

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* Lowndes, Greene, Wilcox, Hale, Sumter, Perry, Bullock, Henry, Crenshaw, and Conecuh Counties all have a median annual per capita income level of less than $740 and are classified by OEO as 100 percent poverty counties, for which OEO will furnish 100 percent of the funding for antipoverty programs.

Special Committee members were informed that although white persons in the county were unwilling to be publicly associated with leadership of the poverty program, there were several people of influence who have helped. A Negro resident commented that if only some member of the power structure were to speak out openly in favor of such efforts as the poverty program is making, this would have a tremendous influence in encouraging others to move toward support of other federally funded economic opportunity projects that the county has so far resisted.

FACILITIES FOR POVERTY CLASSES. As of March 1965, the Antipoverty Coordinating Committee was not allowed to use public school plants and facilities and was conducting classes in churches and abandoned school buildings on church property. In response to questioning by the Special Committee's co-chairmen, however, the superintendent indicated that he would recommend to the Board that classroom space be allotted for the basic skills classes, although he did not specify when he anticipated taking such action.

Prospects for Further Progress

In several other ways, Negro citizens are beginning to forge an economic future for themselves in Wilcox County. Farm worker families have acquired several sites and applied for an OEO grant for self-help housing.

Plans are being made for establishment of a credit union to serve members of the Negro community.

A Farming Co-op has been established by 100 farmers who have leased 600 acres for intensive cooperative cultivation in cucumbers, okra, and peas. Although the former governor sought to discredit their effort by charging that they were a politically motivated, militant civil rights group, the Farming Co-op has applied successfully for OEO funding to assist in development of the land and purchase of heavy equipment. The investment is expected to yield a minimum per acre income of $400. Marketing for the crops is guaranteed under an agreement with a pickling company which will set up grading and storage stations in the area.

Project Headstart

While Negro groups, seeking to increase their own productivity, are beginning to participate in and contribute to the economy of the county, the school leadership of Wilcox has moved only when prodded to increase the educational productivity of the school system.

During 1966-67, $600,000 in Project Headstart funds was lost to Wilcox County because of the failure of the School Board and administration to apply for the year-round Headstart program, even after they had sought to obtain control of the program from the Negro Principals' Association.

The Principals' Association had operated the program in 1965 and 1966, at which time the County Board was ineligible for federal funds because of its refusal to end the dual school system. During the summer of 1966, the Negro principals made plans to apply to OEO for a $600,000 OEO grant for a year-round Headstart program. Because more facilities would be required for a year-round operation than had been used for the summer programs, the principals asked the superintendent and Board of Education if some of the school system's facilities and services could be made available to the program for year-round use. The Board then informed them, through the superintendent, that it intended to make application for the year-round Headstart operation. The Board assumed sponsorship in September 1966, but never filed the application. Once the Board and superintendent had announced their intention to apply, even though they did nothing, no other group felt free to make application.

Although there was concern among Wilcox County residents in March 1967 that the Board of Education would again fail to apply for Headstart funds in time for a summer program in 1967, the NEA Special Committee has been informed since that time the Board did apply just in time to meet the OEO's application deadline for summer operation.

Underutilization of Federal Resources: A Regional Failure

The failure to utilize federal funds is not peculiar to Wilcox County. Resistance to federal antipoverty and educational grants has been particularly acute in the South, where there has been a great deal of reluctance to volunteer for anything requiring nondiscrimination. Yet the Southern states have shown no hesitation in making use of federal moneys in other enterprises, such as highway building and industrial and agricultural development. In the latter two areas, this funding has long been of particular assistance to white middle-class groups. It was, in fact, federal funds pumped in through the New Deal which helped to pull many areas of the South out of the economic stagnation created by the depression of the early thirties.

This same South shows little taste for the antipoverty programs of the sixties because it is more anxious to solve its problems through outmigration than it is to improve all of its people.

Forty-four percent of the poverty in the United States is to be found in the 11 Southern states. Because the South has not sought its equal share, only 20 percent of the nation's poverty money was utilized by the South during fiscal year 1965. As shown in Table 6, only one other Southern state utilized a smaller amount of Economic Opportunity funds per poor person than did Alabama.

Table 6
EOA Expenditures per Poor Person in Southern States

State	*Total EOA per Poor Person*[57]
Arkansas	$33.12
Mississippi	31.77
Florida	25.09
Georgia	19.82
Tennessee	19.81
Texas	17.77
North Carolina	16.25
Virginia	12.89
Louisiana	12.38
Alabama	10.61
South Carolina	10.19

The program possibilities for Wilcox County and for Alabama are numerous, and the developmental opportunities which they could open up, if fully and fairly utilized, are extensive. Among the antipoverty and educational programs that are not in Wilcox County at all and are only slightly used in Alabama are the following:

JOB CORPS. An adaptation of the New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps camps. It has established residential centers for young men and women aged 16 through 21 who lack schooling and skills essential for employment. The Corps combines job training and "constructive work experience," much of it in conservation projects in a two-year stint.

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS. The largest part of the Poverty Program, supplying federal financial support for a number of projects in urban and rural areas, on Indian reservations, and among migrant workers. A major requirement of Economic Opportunity legislation is that the CAP program bring together, along with the poor minority groups, private organizations and the various service systems of a community in a concerted attack on poverty.

NEIGHBORHOOD YOUTH CORPS. A Department of Labor effort to furnish full-time or part-time training and experience for young people in local hospitals, settlement houses, schools, libraries, courts, parks, and playgrounds.

VISTA. The Volunteers in Service to America, which pays a modest living allowance to volunteers who enlist for one year as aides in the War on Poverty to work with migrants, in depressed rural and urban areas, in hospitals and in schools.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION. Office of Education assistance to the states for special literacy training programs.

RURAL LOANS. Department of Agriculture loans and technical assistance to low-income farm families to increase their earnings and to start or strengthen cooperatives serving these families.

SMALL BUSINESS LOANS. From the Small Business Administration to retail and service enterprises—luncheonettes, filling stations, drug stores, dry cleaners, and the like—which would not otherwise be eligible for assistance because of lack of collateral, a history of poor credit, or the high failure risk involved.

COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM. U.S. Department of Agriculture food donation program to improve the nutrition of schoolchildren and families in need of food assistance. The Department of Agriculture pays for processing and packaging the foods and for transporting them in carload lots to receiving points chosen by the state. State and local governments pay costs of intrastate transportation, storage, and distribution. Available foods may be donated to nonprofit school lunch programs, summer camps for children, charitable institutions, and state and local welfare agencies for distribution to low-income households.

JOB TRAINING FOR DISADVANTAGED PERSONS. A Manpower Development and Training program demonstrating that community institutions can create training and guidance programs for disadvantaged, unemployed persons. Experimental testing, casework, individual and group counseling, and work conditioning techniques are used to prepare the individual for training and employment as well as to facilitate participation in the formal training programs.

MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS. Provides occupational training for unemployed and underemployed persons who cannot reasonably be expected to obtain appropriate full-time employment without training. Basic education may be provided when it is required to enable trainees to undertake occupational training. The program provides for payment of training allowances of up to 104 weeks and transportation and subsistence allowances to eligible trainees. Workers having priority for selection for training are unemployed workers (including members of farm families with less than $1,200 annual net family income), underemployed workers, disadvantaged youth between the ages of 16 and 22 who are out of school and in need of occupational training, and persons who will be trained for skills needed first within the labor area in which they live and second within the state in which they live. (These are particularly important programs for Wilcox County in view of the anticipated establishment of the new pulpwood plant.)

WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM. An Office of Economic Opportunity program providing financial assistance to states for establishment and operation of construction work experience and training projects. In many instances, public facilities such as garages, hospitals, offices, and recreation areas can be used to provide work experience and appropriate training.

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT. A program operated by the U.S. Employment Service or by state employment services and designed to stimulate and support community efforts to expand employment opportunities. In rural areas remote from local state employment service offices, mobile teams extend employment services to rural people and work with community development groups in formulating programs to expand employment opportunities. Interviewing, counseling, testing, and job development services are provided to individuals. The team also helps local leaders to analyze area employment problems and to initiate projects of community assistance, including various training and youth employment programs.

EXPERIMENTAL AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS WITH LIMITED ABILITY TO READ AND WRITE. Manpower Development and Training Program providing intensive counseling, work tryouts, and tests and instruction in basic communication and social skills for those with a limited ability to read and write. Those eligible are unemployed or underemployed persons with problems that preclude their using regular MDTA programs. They must depend upon welfare, lack significant work history, and usually have less than a fifth- or sixth-grade education. The programs utilize the special facilities that regional vocational institutes can provide to rural youth and adults under the MDTA.

LIBRARY SERVICES AND CONSTRUCTION, RURAL AND URBAN. Funded under the Library Services and Construction Act and providing annual grants to states to enable them to extend library services to areas that have inadequate or no public library services. Funds may be used to finance library construction or the extension of library services.

INTENSIVE COMMUNITY IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM. Funded under Vaccination Assistance Act of 1962 and providing grants to states and local agencies conducting intensive immunization programs against poliomyelitis, diphtheria, whooping cough, and tetanus for practically all susceptible persons in a community, particularly young children. Applicants may request that vaccines be furnished or federal personnel detailed, in lieu of money grants.

GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH PRACTICE AND RESEARCH. A U.S. Public Health Service Program to provide financial and technical assistance to political bodies, individuals, agencies, and organizations to support basic health programs and stimulate development of new programs.

FEDERAL CREDIT UNIONS. A program operated by the Bureau of Federal Credit Unions and providing an opportunity for groups of low-income people to establish, own, operate, and control their own credit unions. Any community group, either urban or rural, that has a community action program for the benefit of the community and its individuals may include a credit union as one of its activities.

RURAL RENEWAL LOANS TO PUBLIC AGENCIES. A Farmers Home Administration program, providing loans and technical assistance to public agencies located in designated rural renewal areas to help stimulate the economy of low-income areas. Areas eligible for designation as rural renewal areas are those where agriculture and forestry contribute substantially to the local economy and where there is chronic underemployment on the farms and in the surrounding communities.

These are only a small number of the many federal programs that could provide immeasurable benefits, not only to the individuals who are locked in poverty, but to the economic enrichment of Wilcox County—and all the other Wilcox Counties—the rural, isolated, depressed areas that, in differing degrees with some differing characteristics, are scattered across the nation.

> No thoughtful Southerner, including businessmen, could help but regret the enormous waste of resources in time and energy devoted to fighting the ignoble battle to defend segregation instead of going to meet those crucial needs of education and training . . . which must underlie fundamental economic growth.[58]

CONCLUSIONS

1. A great share of the responsibility for the conditions of public education in Wilcox County rests with the Alabama State Department of Education. In terms of relative equalization effort, as compared to state gross income, Alabama has a notable record. Only one other state bears a larger proportion of the costs of public education in its local school districts. Through its equalization program of school support, the State of Alabama is responsible for 95 percent of the Wilcox County School District's budget. With this heavy investment in Wilcox County schools, the State Department of Education has an obligation to the taxpayers of Alabama to provide the necessary supervision to ensure that the money is efficiently utilized.

2. State legislators from Wilcox County and other Black Belt counties have had more influence on the educational affairs of the state than is justified by the actual number of persons who, in the past, have had the franchise in the districts they represent. Wilcox County residents hold membership on the State Board of Education, on the State Teacher Tenure Commission, and in the governor's personal advisory group.

3. Neither the white nor the Negro children in Wilcox County are receiving an adequate education; and very little effort is being put forth locally to improve the situation.

4. Among the factors adversely affecting Wilcox County schools is the extreme scarcity of local funds: Wilcox County is one of the three poorest counties in Alabama and the twenty poorest counties in the nation. Even so, Wilcox County is not taxing itself at the 12-mill maximum allowed by the state without an election. A few Alabama counties have held elections to raise the rate as high as 18 mills. The assessed value of the entire county for school tax purposes is less than the sale price of the average downtown city block. To make matters worse, many taxpayers are getting their taxes lowered by destroying the dwellings on farmland and converting their farms to timberland.

5. The record of expenditures for Negro and white students of Wilcox County since 1955 should dispel any last prevailing remnants of the myth of "separate but equal." Between 1955 and 1963, the average amount of local funds spent annually per white child was more than five times greater than the average annual expenditure per Negro child. Conditions at the schools maintained for Negro students have been, and continue to be, inferior to those of the traditionally white schools of Wilcox County, although there are three Negro school sites which contain some buildings that compare favorably with the schools enrolling predominantly white student bodies.

6. Supervisory services for all schools are practically nonexistent. The superintendent had not visited some of the Negro schools until 1966-67, although that was his second year in the county.

7. Because the schools lack supplies, facilities, supervision, and in-service education programs, and because many teachers have all but given up to what seems to be a hopeless situation, many things which the teachers and students could do to make their schools more bearable, even without additional funds, are not being done. Nevertheless, many teachers and parents are to be commended for using their own meagre funds to buy school supplies, books, and equipment, and even pay utility bills.

8. Transportation and communication services are shamefully inadequate. Negro students get the oldest buses. Buses for Negroes are overcrowded—even those that make two trips. No bus for white children is overcrowded. If it were left up to the county, only two of the schools for Negroes would have telephone service. It is only through local fund-raising efforts that telephones are provided in 11 of the 13 Negro schools.

9. Written personnel policies are nonexistent. However, the superintendent has indicated a willingness to work with teachers from both associations in the development of such policies.

10. Professional associations, as well as faculties, are still totally segregated, and very little two-way communication between the races takes place, even among professional educators.

11. The poor of both races are exploited by the affluent landowners. The poor whites are kept in line by fear of losing their illusionary place, one step above the Negroes. The Negroes are kept in their place by economic dependence and by fear of physical harm.

12. Until 1965, Negroes were systematically and totally disfranchised in Wilcox County. Even now that Negroes are a voting majority in the county, they have not made their political potential felt. Many fear that they do not have a secret ballot, and many are afraid to organize and work for a better way of life because of the threat of physical and economic reprisal.

13. Because there has been until recently no Negro suffrage in Wilcox County and because the political affairs of the county have long been tightly controlled by a white, land-owning minority, the Negro citizens of Wilcox have yet to develop a sufficient awareness of political procedures, strategies, and structures to allow them to be, in fact, as politically effective as their voting majority should warrant. For example, the NEA Special Committee was appalled by the lack of knowledge concerning the election of school boards. No person questioned on this matter was able to remember the last time a school board election was held.

14. The failure of the poor whites to understand that their destiny is inextricably interwoven with that of the majority of poor Negroes has caused the county to lose by default its greatest promise for recovery—the new federal programs. Because of refusal to comply with the 1964 Civil Rights Act, close to a half-million dollars in federal aid to education was lost to Wilcox County. Because of failure to apply, or because of interference on the part of state officials, an estimated potential of 3 million dollars in OEO funds of various types is not fully being utilized.

15. It is hard to imagine what the plight of Negroes in Wilcox County might have been without the missionary zeal of the United Presbyterian Church, as well as the mission programs of other denominations that have worked in the county over the past 40 years to educate Negroes. The educational programs of these early church schools have produced a number of persons with doctoral degrees who are making a fine contribution to other areas of the country.

16. As the churches have gradually turned over to the county an increasing share of the responsibility for Negro education, the educational opportunities of both Negroes and whites have steadily diminished. The county is trying to provide an education for both races based on the same local tax structure that it used only for white students during the years when there was no public education for Negroes.

17. Because of the long years of neglect and because the local economy is declining rather than improving, the county has systematically exported its brightest youth, both white and Negro, over two decades. Only massive financial aid from outside the county, assisted by professional leadership from universities and urban areas of the state, can bring about any real solution to the problems of ignorance and poverty now strangling the county's growth potential.

18. The erection of a new dam and the anticipated opening of a new mill offer some hope of relief for Wilcox County's economic woes, but for most of the county's poor, this is an illusion, a soap bubble of hope that will be short-lived. The truth is that the engineers who work on the dam, as well as the skilled workers of the paper plant, will have to be imported unless Wilcox can set up manpower training programs to train workers for some of these jobs.

19. The courage exhibited by members of the Wilcox County Teachers Association and its PR&R Committee and Principals' Association in calling for an investigation is heroic in view of the intimidation, reprisals, and legal attacks to which the Negro educators have been subjected. In 1965, eight tenure teachers were dismissed under highly questionable circumstances. Three of four teachers who were given relief and ordered re-

instated by the state's own Teacher Tenure Commission have still not been reinstated. Also in 1965, the state legislature passed a law penalizing teachers who took part in demonstrations and another which penalized teachers whose students took part in boycotts and demonstrations.

In 1966, the legislature removed Wilcox County teachers from the protection of the State Teacher Tenure Act, bringing to nine the number of Black Belt Alabama counties in which the tenure law has been repealed.

20. Although a federal appeals court has ordered the Wilcox County Board of Education to transfer 66 Negro students to previously all-white schools, only a few Negro students currently attend such schools. No whites attend schools which have been traditionally for Negroes. Because of intimidation by students and neglect of duty by some educators, the number of Negroes attending at least one of the previously white schools has declined rather than increased. Negro girls and boys have been kicked, knocked down, and beaten by individuals and gangs of white boys.

21. The problems of education in Wilcox County are multiplied and compounded by the gross inefficiency of school organization. The system has 10 "high" schools (each containing grades 1-12), not one of which has an enrollment large enough to justify the staff and equipment necessary for a modern, diversified educational program. Only at exorbitant per pupil expense could such a program be provided by the Wilcox County School System; and as this report has clearly shown, there is nothing exorbitant about the per pupil expenditure in Wilcox County.

22. In order to staff the high schools sufficiently to provide even a bare minimum of course offerings, administrators have overloaded elementary classes to a point that is deplorable and, in fact, almost incredible. The NEA Special Committee found evidence from five independent sources which indicated that at the time the investigation was requested, there were elementary classes with from 60 to more than 80 pupils enrolled. The attendance as reported to the state for ADA purposes would indicate that more than 90 percent of these students were usually present.

23. There is a substantial differential between the elementary school enrollment and the high school enrollment of Wilcox County, evidencing a gradual steady decrease in total school enrollment. This is apparently caused by the continuous out-migration of youth and by excessively high student dropout rates.

On the basis of three studies of big-city educational problems by the NEA PR&R Commission, the NEA Special Committee for the Wilcox County study is convinced that the dropouts from hundreds of poor counties such as Wilcox throughout the region and the nation are compounding the already disastrous conditions of big cities.

24. Various research studies, as well as many recent NEA PR&R Commission investigations, combine to bring home a central message to the American people:

a. Except in affluent, suburban communities where the educational orientation of parents places a high priority on the education of their children, the property tax is inadequate and is probably anachronistic as the primary basis of local public school support.
b. Absentee landlords, apartment house owners, and holders of large estates have indicated an unwillingness to pay taxes for the support of public education in other localities than their own. Moreover, they are finding new ways to reduce the already inadequate taxes which they are paying.
c. This gradual reduction of the per capita tax effort, combined with rapidly rising educational costs, is creating a national crisis in both rural and urban school districts.

25. The NEA Special Committee is convinced that the American public (especially the residents of the great metropolitan areas, North and South) can no longer stand idly by and watch the future problems of this country incubate in the hundreds of poverty-stricken school districts in rural America. In a nation that has been drawn closer together by rapid transportation and instant communications media and by the ever-increasing mobility of people, there is no region that can long escape the consequences of poverty and ignorance in any other region. For reasons of national self-interest—even casting aside humanitarian considerations—the American conscience can no longer remain immune to the fact that in backward, impoverished counties like Wilcox, where local control of schools has been used as an excuse to maintain the status quo, millions of young people today are being deprived of an education that would prepare them for full participation in a democratic society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Wilcox County Board of Education:

Local School Financing

1. The Board of Education of Wilcox County should—

(a) Institute a campaign designed to help the officials and the citizens make both a more realistic evaluation and a more determined assessment of property. Vigorous pursuit of such a goal should more than double present local income.

(b) Immediately institute measures to raise the millage from the present seven to the state maximum of twelve mills. This would raise local income an additional 40 percent.

(c) Work with state legislators and other interested persons to explore other sources of local funds which are available to school districts under present Alabama law. Many districts improve their local educational programs through taxes on gasoline, cigarettes, beer, and other such items.

Federal Aid

1. The Board of Education of Wilcox County should seek help from such agencies as VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), the state board of education, state professional associations, colleges of education, the National Education Association, and the Southern Education Foundation to bring together a team of planners who could develop a proposal or series of proposals to take advantage of millions of dollars in grants and loans to help raise standards of education, housing, employment, health, and recreation in the county.

2. Without waiting for fiscal reforms or consolidation, the Board of Education should develop projects under all of the current federal acts providing for aid to local districts. State assistance should be sought in the preparation of grant requests to ensure that the proposals will be educationally sound and appropriate to the needs of Wilcox County and to provide greater assurance that they will be approved at the federal level.

More specifically, the Board should—

(a) Insist that the coordinator of federal programs draw up proposals to take advantage of all the funds available to the county under Titles I and II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The array of programs and services fundable under the Act is vast. It includes school health services—provision of professional medical and dental services to schools in low-income areas; remedial instruction, special counseling, and specialized teachers for disadvantaged children; teacher aides; after-school tutoring programs; special programs for rural youth; world-of-work programs for disadvantaged children; special education for handicapped children in low-income areas; free lunches, free breakfasts, and clothing distribution for disadvantaged children.

(b) See that immediate steps are taken to develop proposals for federal funding under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Act, which provides for supplementary education centers and services in low-income areas. Under this Title of the Act, the school system could work with other agencies of the community to establish a center for improvement of instruction which would operate on a nonsectarian basis and would be open evenings. Additional library and recreation facilities could be obtained under this Title.

(c) Direct the school administration to develop plans and make application for federal funding under the various titles of the Economic Opportunities Act (Work-Study Programs, Youth Opportunities, Adult Education, etc.), as summarized in an earlier section of this report.

(d) Direct the school administration to make application for a grant to provide intergroup relations training for both parents and teachers under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A coordinator of intergroup relations could be employed from these funds, thus providing a much needed supervisory service for Wilcox County schools.

(e) Proceed with plans for a year-round Headstart program. Approximately $600,000 is now available to Wilcox County for this purpose.

(f) Cooperate with local poverty groups by allowing available school buildings to be used for adult literacy classes and child day-care centers. Approximately $100,000 is fundable for these purposes under various OEO programs.

School Consolidation

1. The Board of Education should call in state and university building experts to advise in developing plans to reduce the current 16 schools of Wilcox County to no more than 5 school centers.

2. Keeping in mind the recommendations of the Conant and Peabody studies, the Board of Education should begin its program of consolidation by reducing the duplication of programs now offered at Camden Academy and Wilcox County High School. Both campuses have some buildings which are the most substantial in the county. Since the schools are approximately eight blocks apart, they could be reorganized (so that lower grades are

Camden Academy: The campus has "some buildings which are the most substantial in the country"

offered exclusively at one school and higher grades exclusively at the other) without undue inconvenience to students who walk to school and with only minor bus rerouting for those students who are transported by the school system.

3. The Board of Education should utilize the $500,000 now available from a two-year-old state bonding program to implement the above suggestions.

School Services and Personnel

1. With additional local funds gained from tax reform, from maximum utilization of a 12-mill levy, and from new nonproperty taxes, the Board of Education should arrange to have professional assistance provided for the superintendent so that adequate supervision may be exercised over the schools.

(a) This implies a higher level of performance on the part of principals, leading to a better instructional program.
(b) Also implied is more adequate attention to maintenance and custodial needs, which were very evident.
(c) Assistance should be provided to enforce compulsory school attendance.
(d) Specialized personnel are needed to supervise the instructional programs of the elementary and secondary schools, to develop a program of systematized internal accounting, and to ensure accuracy of pupil attendance records.

2. The Board should reconsider its position on the desirability of employment tenure for teachers.

3. Early implementation should be made of the plan to have a teachers committee, composed of representatives from both associations, to help in the preparation of written personnel policies.

4. The Board of Education should take immediate steps to provide adequate transportation for all of the children enrolled in Wilcox County Public Schools.

5. The Board of Education should provide adequate facilities for the central office staff and auxiliary personnel of Wilcox County Public Schools.

To the Citizens of Wilcox County:

Neither an increase in federal funding nor other outside assistance will be enough to effect basic, constructive changes in policy direction on the part of the school and governing establishments of Wilcox County. The movement for such change will have to come from an aroused citizenry. It will be the people of Wilcox, with assistance from outside but with direction and resolution from within, who rescue the county from educational and economic blight.

1. Citizens groups should organize to study the needs of the county in public education, as in other areas of community life. They should publicize the problems that they find; and they should enlist the active involvement of as many concerned, or potentially concerned, citizens and groups as possible—including educators, business people, church groups, farmers, and housewives—to develop plans for concerted and responsible action to effect educational, political, and economic change.

2. Citizens groups should attend School Board meetings to see what kinds of programs are being proposed and implemented and to make their wishes known to the Board.

3. Citizens groups should inform themselves about the proper responsibility of boards of education; they should study school board election laws in the state and county and should obtain information about the methods of selecting and recalling board of education members.

4. Citizens throughout the county should recognize their interdependence; they should become aware that the enforced impoverishment and ignorance of any one segment of the community is, in fact, a perpetual drain on the productivity of the community as a whole.

5. Citizens groups working to improve conditions in Wilcox County should widely publicize the fact that all the citizens are being denied the economic and educational enrichment that can result from constructive use of federal funding and assistance simply because their public officials are determined to exclude Negro citizens from the benefits of federally assisted educational and antipoverty programs.

6. Concerned citizens must organize and move together throughout the county to exert positive influence on public officials and to elect individuals to office who are, in fact, representative of the population in its makeup and responsive to the needs and wishes of the people.

To State Education Agencies and the State Legislature:

1. The State Board and State Department of Education and the State Legislature should take immediate steps to make the Teacher Tenure Law apply statewide and to empower the Tenure Commission with the legal authority to enforce its decisions.

2. In view of the state's legal responsibility for public education, and in view of the percentage of state taxes already going to support the public schools of Wilcox County, the State Department of Education should send a team of consultants, both white and Negro, to evaluate the educa-

tional situation in Wilcox and to help local officials work out solutions to the problems reported in this study, as well as additional problems which such a team will uncover.

3. In view of the possibilities for expansion of the State Department of Education under Title V, the state should establish a task force of specialists in all educational areas to furnish extension supervisory services to Wilcox and other counties that are presently too poor to afford such services on a regular, full-time basis.

4. The State Board of Education should recommend to the Alabama State Legislature that the Minimum Foundation formula be revised to provide greater impetus to consolidation of schools, perhaps through establishment of certain minimum standards for school size for a district to be eligible to participate in the foundation program.

5. The State Board of Education should recommend legislation that would permit extra allocations of teacher units to those districts that, like Wilcox, are unable to employ the supervisory and specialized professional personnel essential to an adequate educational program.

6. The State Board and State Department of Education should take immediate steps toward better utilization of the state vocational trade schools, opening them to students of all races. If this were done, Negro students of Wilcox County would have access to a vocational trade school that is approximately 30 miles from the town of Camden in Wilcox.

To Professional Associations:

1. Both of the local associations, which have not done so, should begin setting up study groups to acquaint teachers with the concepts of professional negotiations, TEPS, PR&R, and classroom teacher groups.

2. Cooperation of the Human Relations Center at Auburn of the University of South Alabama (Mobile) should be sought in developing an in-service program in human relations.

3. Cooperative programs, such as the development of a personnel policy handbook or the development of study guides, should be undertaken jointly by both associations in order to move toward solutions of the problems common to all local teacher groups.

4. The citizenship committees of the associations should develop joint projects and work to build community support for the kind of elected officials who will be committed to the improvement of educational and economic conditions in the county.

5. Realizing that teachers, like all other public servants, are entitled to reasonable security and that as long as the county has been removed from the provisions of the state tenure act, no teacher in Wilcox—white

or Negro—now has reasonable security, the two associations should work through their legislators and their respective state associations to have Wilcox County's exemption from the teacher tenure law rescinded.

6. The local associations, if they have not done so, should immediately establish a joint committee to develop plans for unification, in keeping with NEA Resolution Twelve, 1966.

To Individual Educators:

1. Every teacher who is a true professional should dedicate himself to the unfolding of knowledge to all children, regardless of race, color, creed, or sex. He should strive to see that no one is robbed of human dignity in his class or in his presence.

2. Teachers who have not updated their training or taken courses to prepare themselves for a unitary school system should take advantage of university-sponsored courses, workshops, and institutes in order to develop and enhance their professional competence and readiness for whatever educational changes may occur.

3. Teachers should urge their colleagues to join with them in proposing to the school administration, and helping to establish, in-service education programs at the local schools.

4. Although the county has clearly been derelict in its responsibility for the maintenance and beautification of school plants, appreciable improvements in the appearance of the school environment could be made by the school staff, students, and parents of Wilcox County.

To the Federal Government:

The Office of Education, after careful consideration of the plight of school districts in areas of extreme poverty, should make recommendation to the Congress for appropriate remedial legislation.

Such a program should not replace the present legislation related to elementary and secondary schools, but should supplement existing programs.

1. Grants should be made to school districts in poverty-stricken areas for technical assistance and for the development of plans designed to coordinate the efforts of existing federal, state, local, and private programs in an all-out attack on ignorance, apathy, disease, and poverty. Such assistance could be made available by amending current legislation. The "model cities" bill could be expanded to include "model counties"; and the technical assistance program for undeveloped foreign areas might be amended to include undeveloped areas here in the United States.

2. Grants should be made to assist in implementation of the work of the technical assistance team or planning team. This may involve replacing run-down buildings and run-down school buses; purchasing books, instruc-

tional supplies, and equipment; addition of a gymnasium or a school cafeteria; and hiring of auxiliary personnel.

Again, such assistance could be made possible by amending existing bills. For example, the aid to impacted areas could be expanded to include, in addition to children of the military and government workers, the children of families whose income is less than a certain figure. The current $2,000 and $3,000 indices would probably be adequate. Such a bill could be described as "aid to poverty-impacted areas." As much as so-called federal control is detested, the federal government would be derelict in its duty to protect the interest of the taxpayer if such grants did not contain built-in safeguards to ensure maximum results. For example, if a district is too small to be an efficient educational unit, then these grants should be used to reward the district for combining with another to ensure more efficient management. If the school plants are too small, the grants should reward consolidation. In short, these grants should reward educational reform and innovation. Inefficiency should not be excused as an inevitable concomitant of "local control." Local government must be responsible government.

3. The Committee feels that Wilcox County would be an excellent place for the funding of a pilot project designed to show what government (federal, state, and local); the business community; and private agencies (foundations, education associations, churches, and committees) could do in launching an all-out war against poverty, disease, and ignorance at home.

The Committee calls upon the President of the United States to use the power and influence of his office in setting up a blue ribbon committee of the best talent in the country to create in Wilcox County an example to America and the world of what can be done under extremely difficult conditions if there is a will to do so.

The Committee likewise calls on the Governor of Alabama and the officials, business interests, educators, and parents of Wilcox County to cooperate with such a national effort when it matures.

To the Business Community of Wilcox County:

1. Realizing that no real progress can be made in the county until the business interest is willing to invest its leadership and its financial assets in developing the school system and in raising the income level of all the people, the Committee urges the power structure to break with the past and put the economic future of the county ahead of considerations of social class and social custom.

2. Realizing that the county cannot benefit from educational investment if people whom such investment serves cannot find decent jobs in the county, the Committee urges Wilcox County employers to open up opportunities on an equal basis.

APPENDIX

Wilcox County: Social, Economic, and Political Setting for the Schools

by Floyd Hunter

This paper has been prepared for a Special Investigation Committee of the National Education Association as a background statement of the general sociological and power structure of Wilcox County, Alabama. The problems of the schools would appear to be related to general intransigent policy stances of the local establishment as they relate to the powerlessness and also to the growing restlessness of the dominant (in number) Negro population.

General Demographical and Topographical Data on Wilcox County

NEGRO MAJORITY OF WILCOX COUNTY. Wilcox County is located in the "Black Prairie Belt" of Central Alabama and of the general "Black Belt" of the South.[1] The ratio of Negro to Caucasian population is approximately 4 to 1 or 14,598 nonwhites to 4,141 whites in 1960.[2]

TOPOGRAPHY. The general topography consists of the rolling lands of the upper coastal plain region of Alabama. In winter, at the time of the NEA visit, the many pasture areas have turned brown and the copses of cut-over timber areas are a tangle of gaunt, defoliated trees with an occasional splash of red or yellow from a late-shedding scrub oak or maple.

General Economic View of Wilcox County

CHANGE FROM COTTON ECONOMY TO CATTLE TO WOOD PULP. As one drives into Wilcox County from Montgomery, first along U.S. Highway 80 between Montgomery and Selma and then branching south on State Route 21, one sees a blanket of waste, raw cotton blown from market-bound trucks onto the sides of the highway. This waste deposit thins as one enters Wilcox County, attesting to an economic shift from a cotton economy to cattle and pulpwood.[3] The section does not appear to be especially poor for the white owners. The prevalence of tenant shacks speaks mutely of Negro poverty.

Herds of cattle appear in the many pastures along Route 21. A few plantings of pine appear, presaging more of the same. Both a Vancouver, Canada, paper company and the International Paper Company have leased huge acreages of land for reforestation, and many of the pastures will be turned into crop-timber which will mature after 14- to 16-year intervals for pulp cuttings.

Direct observation, book references, and interviews with a limited number of Wilcox citizens make it apparent that the general economy of the County can be summed up in the next few paragraphs.

Historically, a plantation cotton economy had held sway in Wilcox County until the "boll weevil hit hard in the 1920's." The cotton economy has never fully recovered, even with heavy pesticide dusting and fertilizing.

Cotton was succeeded partially by cattle raising, and the future would seem to hold both pulpwood and recreational components. One farmer-highway merchant referred to a squire "up the road" who "quit cotton and cattle both" last year after he "made only a half bale of cotton to the acre on 800 acres and went in the hole on cattle—having to feed them heavy during a long winter." This man's landed neighbor, like several score of other large landholders, has leased his land to one of the newly established pulp companies. The arrangement seems to be to lease at $10 per acre per year for as much as 60 years.

One storekeeper informant illogically said, "Take $10 an acre for ten years. That's like selling it for $100 an acre (!) and you don't lose title to your land."

TIMBER LEASES THWART OWNERSHIP AMBITIONS OF MINORITIES. When the timber is cropped for pulp, the owner participates in the going price of the crop. Contracts vary on this amount as well as on the general lease subsidy. I could get no firm average figure on either amount.

In any event, the tying up of large acreages of land in timber rights is delivering the control of land into the hands of the national and international corporations and at the same time securing large-scale ownership in the hands of those who now hold such ownership. It also reduces the tax base potential in an area almost completely dependent upon property taxes. These moves effectively scotch the hopes of both the lower middle-class striver for land ownership and the black peasant who shares the same hope and goal.

Policy in the matter, however, is being made by the ownership establishment, which is trading land rights for corporate certificates and, in some cases, corporate board memberships.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AT EXPENSE OF POOR COMMUNITIES. A large dam, the Miller's Ferry Lock and Dam, is being built across the Alabama River on the western edge of the County. From this the ownership establishment intends to prosper through a hoped-for inflow of industry and through attracting more tourist vacationers. The dam will impound water to allow interstate barge shipping from the Gulf of Mexico to at least Northern Georgia; finally the waterway may extend to the Great Lakes and link with Atlantic routes.[4]

The calculated policy of "bringing in industry," a refrain which the business associations chorus insistently, may be thoroughly questioned in Wilcox County, Alabama. In an area dependent upon land taxes, corporate exemption from taxation is poor policy. The establishment of Wilcox County joins that of several thousand other localities of the nation which thoughtlessly mouth clichés about "bringing in industry" when, actually, at great cost to local communities in the South, only about 80 industries a year relocate. The promotional cost to all is astronomical and wasteful.

Industry can be said to be brought to Alabama at the cost of adequate schools. Negro people, especially, are paying dearly for the doubtful advantages of having more industry in Wilcox County. The tax inducements and road building, plant building, and water rights granted to relocating industries generally in Alabama at this stage of development might better be used for developing public schools. This policy needs to be offered for alternative consideration in the state. Tax rebates to the state from the federal government based on corporate GNP could provide a better tax base for Alabama than the shortsighted policy of "bring in industry" at local expense.

Except for the new pulp mills, local industry is clustered principally in Camden, the County seat, and merely consists of nine small establishments related to wood products (veneers, boat building materials, lumber, and sawing); livestock; and feeds and fertilizers. A weekly newspaper and commercial printing plant exhausts the array.[5] The collection appears to have changed little in at least two decades. Wood and general agricultural products, were principal products of Wilcox County in 1944 as well as 1966.[6]

None of these industries compares in volume or importance in the area with the plantation system of the economy and its ownership status characteristics.

Social Background of Prestige and Power Against Which General Education Is Projected in Wilcox County, Alabama, 1966

"PLANTATION COUNTY" STUDY USED AS BASIS OF COMPARISON. In 1951, Morton Rubin published a dissertation on *Plantation County*, which county is actually Wilcox County, Alabama.[7] I shall use this work as a quick-shutter shot taken in 1951 by which change may be measured in 1966.

A review of Dr. Rubin's work, coupled with a brief on-the-ground survey in Wilcox County, suggests to me that the general class structure of prestige and privilege outlined in 1951 has not changed appreciably in 1966.

Dr. Rubin's analysis, related to both the Negro and white class structure, described graphically and accurately the continuing fact of class differentiations related to housing, education, and other institutionalized modes of behavior that keep plantation owners in the plantation houses, the lower middle-class people in the roadside grocery–filling-station–house complexes, and the Negro in the rural wasteland ghettoes.[8]

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ADAPTATION RATHER THAN SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE. Life in Wilcox County stays the same in spite of a lot of talk about "progress" and "change." The old ways take on new names, and the shift in nomenclature is called change. The basic ownership patterns have not changed.

Such social movements as may have occurred in Wilcox County in the past two decades are actually adaptations to shifting agricultural conditions and to the changing requirements of the national industrial production machine, a part of which now requires increased acreages of wood pulp-producing lands.

Substantively the Negro, as least common denominator in the social scale, stays put. Until there is an emerging newness in relation to his lot, no basic social change can actually be noted in Wilcox County.

OBSERVATIONS RELATED TO EDUCATION EXAMINED. The direct observations made by Dr. Rubin about education also need only slight alterations to be applicable to 1966. Because of their pertinence to the NEA Special Committee, I shall remark upon the few slight changes that should be noted as 1966 background. Dr. Rubin said:

> One function of the public school as an institution is to inculcate the folkways, mores, and the values of the society on the child and the student. In Plantation area or the South, they instill southern and, for the most part plantation area values in the pupils. But recently there has been an increase in the influence of mass culture. This is represented by a heightened interest in science, technology, and even social and political issues. Negro schools have introduced Negro history and literature; this has bolstered Negro race pride and has combatted the effects of race-caste subordinating behavior patterns.
>
> . . . Negro schools in Plantation County, as in all parts of the segregated South, are vastly inferior to white schools in all respects. . . . The gap is still far from being closed, and we should recognize the forces at work both to close it and to keep it from being closed.
>
> . . . Adequate funds are not supplied for school busses; . . . Negro

> schools are crowded and poorly equipped. The teachers do not meet state-recommended standards for good teachers. Despite the fact that the total budget for all Negro schools in Plantation County has recently surpassed the total white budget, per capita expenditures for Negro pupils is much less than for whites. . . .
>
> Race-caste is at the root both of segregation and the present condition of Negro education. The future of Negro education in the area is also dependent on race-caste trends. . . . The value system of the plantation area in this respect is being bombarded by the American value system which preaches equality of opportunity and one class of citizenship for all. There is conflict, anxiety, insecurity, and guilt feeling among the whites; the Negroes are likewise insecure and they are frustrated. . . .

These changes that might be made in the Rubin statements above are put forward:

1. The heightened interest in science and technology on the part of a majority of people in Wilcox County has not been reflected in the responses of educational policy makers in providing scientific educational equipement for this mass of Negro pupils. On-site views of the Negro schools can easily establish this fact.

2. Rubin spoke of "segregated" schools, while one piece of literature of 1966 on Alabama schools speaks of general "integration."[9] Integration, according to those interviewed in Wilcox County, is token, with a handful of Negro students placed in each of two or three grades in white schools of the County. Negro and white schools are still the facts, as they were facts in 1951. The modification has not been that of change, but of "adaptation."

3. Dr. Rubin's work could not prepare one for the obvious hardening of white opinion related to social matters that meets one upon even superficial inquiry related to economic questions generally.

When one asks about race specifically or school problems, one generally meets with bland denials of any difficulty; in one instance, this investigator was met with a flat refusal to even discuss the matter.

SCHOOL PROBLEMS DEFINED BY SOCIOPOLITICAL SETTING. Dr. Rubin could not, in 1951, have guessed at the intensity of the struggle for civil rights that is now going on; nor could he have foreseen the determination in either camp of this struggle—the determination on one side to win, on the other to continue to oppress.

The struggle is that naked. The facts are plain to see on every hand.

The resurgence of the Klan movement, with all of its Nazi-like characteristics, could not have been described in 1951.

It must be stressed that this movement, contrary to the opinion of some of the uninformed, is not led by the oppressed, so-called "poor white trash" (a vile epithet thrown at the Southern, white poor), but by the more affluent, politically manipulated roadside merchants who blindly follow and stupidly mouth the political nostrums handed to them by statehouse politicians and their industrial and plantation mentors.

Even in the case of the larger landholders, one is dealing here, as in other portions of the South, with a plantation squirearchy of little people with peasant backgrounds who are Caucasian and who got here first, hoping to make good by planting crops. They themselves have been subject to manipulation and oppression by the banking and mortgage agents of the Northern banks since the Civil War. In their turn, with questionable returns for their pains, they have oppressed a black peasantry through the manipulation of police forces, judicial apparatus, welfare cops, and educational lackeys.

The black peasant, for his part, has the same aspirations and attitudes toward land and chattels as those who preceded him, and the struggle is over the goods of this world. The whole struggle obviously is not necessarily and primarily over either more or better education nor questions of generosity and morality.

One must be able to differentiate between the aging squirearchy and the pushing lower middle-class people who operate the roadside gas-station-grocery-stores and who, like the Nazis of Germany, as a class are the leaders of the Klan. Like the Junkers of Germany, the squirearchy actively or passively supports the storekeeper's violence and bluster. One needs, however, to know whose sons are going to the legislature and who holds positions on the corporate and bank boards and school boards to accurately gauge the current, real power of the Klan enclaves. In this, the ownership establishments come out ahead.

A systematic development of national supermarket chains could wipe out the lower middle class as freebooters, but under such conditions, one would trade local independent tradesmen for a greater consolidation of the national corporate society, which to date has tacitly supported segregation by supporting the squirearchy through allowing them to buy into Southern corporate ventures like the pulp mill of Wilcox County.

The contradictions and crosscurrents of the schema are many and complex, but with patient study they may finally be understood. It is against and within these currents that decisions are being made about education. One needs to know something about the management of the local economy and its ownership structure first in order to understand next the behavior patterns around the squire house, the courthouse, and the Negro slum house, as all these relate to educating the young.

Finally, one needs to understand the forces, formal and informal, of power in order to fully understand the essential struggle of the South today.

That struggle extends from border to border in the nation and is not confined to Plantation (Wilcox) County.

The Establishment and Power Structure of Wilcox County

Like those in other communities, the establishment and its supportive power structure are built upon what people own and do. The establishment of Wilcox County, as repeatedly stated, is made up of the land owners, large and small, Negro and white. The power structure is that active apparatus, psychological and physical, that keeps custom and institutional privilege intact for the establishment and opens the way for its own members to enter the establishment.

The plantation system, with its gradations in size and land holdings, is as good a measure as any of the status structure in Wilcox County.

Rubin says:

> The power, prestige, and authority of the plantation owner naturally enable him to control the human factor in the situation to a degree far exceeding comparable institutions in a supposedly democratic society. The plantation remains a last vestige of beneficent despotism. The system makes for potential justice or injustice at the whim of the individual owners.

DIRECT OBSERVATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS. In order to gain some empirical, firsthand impressions of Wilcox County, I began a series of chain-referral interviews with five separate roadside storekeepers and restaurant operators upon entry into the County.* These lower middle class, socially marginal men and women, well described by Faulkner, are good informants about power personnel superior to them and about the social and economic conditions generally. Their place and fortune are dependent upon the stability and/or shifts of the whole social system. They are upwardly mobile and have their eye out for the main chance, and they so instruct their children. The opinions of the storekeepers were in some instances reinforced by sideline opinions of the hot-stove league loafing about.

There was general agreement that plantation farming is still the base of the establishment. A half-dozen family names were immediately given to me as being those of the landed establishment. Of these, in the time at my disposal, I was able to interview four. There were obviously a couple of dozen more families who could have served equally well as respondents.

My general, immediate impression from these interviews is that the squirearchy is firmly in command, but recognizes that it is being challenged by the Negro people. It considers the lower middle class an ally in keeping things as they are and wrongly does not consider these people a threat to plantation power. The older members of the ownership establishment are being replaced by those younger members who have been well indoctrinated for their positions; their indoctrination includes liberal doses of race superiority propaganda laced with the notions that rights of property, recognition, and privilege should be reserved for a few.

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* As will be described later, I also interviewed four families in the land ownership establishment and three Negro families.

Attitudes toward race are often humorously put, e.g., "The old school Negro principal I knew well was a little different than the present ones. The old man was well educated, a graduate from Princeton, and he wrote poetry! His interests were more intellectual and not so *active*, if you get my meaning" (laughing roguishly) or "an awful lot of them [the Negroes] have got into the schools! Why, I think there's three of them in Camden High right now!" There are the tired old references to the poverty and struggle of the grandfathers who returned from the "War" to "parched corn and chicory coffee and chick-pea flour for bread," but no reference to the miserable poverty of the rural Negro ghetto today. There is considerable reference to the Selma March in disapproving tones and terms, applause for the freeing of those who have been charged with murdering Negroes, and concern that the "unfavorable publicity" over "recent events" might impede the industrial and agricultural "progress" that seems so evident on every hand to the "haves."

There was the street along the state route on the west side of town—externally undifferentiated from a thousand such streets in smalltown America—along which the "retired" plantation owners (people who plant crops) and their retainers (lawyers, schoolteachers, and ranking commercial suppliers) live. Those who live apart—away from this charmed ecological inner-ground—apologize for their lack of status; a bailiff's wife, for example, who lives in the woods in the hills on the "wrong side" of town. Her husband, a self-made man, serves the requirements of the establishment.

There are the sly jokes about race that run around a circle of men at the restaurants which turn seriously into political questions observed in the headlines of the morning papers.

There are the suspicious looks at a stranger who may enter a restaurant from a federal highway and who may dress slightly differently from those on the scene.

There are the subtle questions about where you are from and what your business might be. "How come you're riding in a 'rent car'?" They have observed the license number and are letting you know that they have.

There is the sad country music with interspersed conservative philosophy in the television commercials and narrow-minded pulpit orations.

There are the many, many Negroes in uniform, hardly seen by those around them, going to Vietnam.

There are the half-ton trucks with racks for hunting rifles and shotguns within easy reach over the driver's seat.

One physically feels the relatively open, churlish hostility of some of the gas station attendants and their crony circles. There is sorrowful reference to the fact that a nearby plantation which once had 47 Negro family tenants now has but two families (living, as I noted, in tin-roofed shacks). The sadness, on the part of those who flatten and elongate their vowels, was over the loss of a "way of life," a loss that I was at a loss to understand—for the way of life (again) seemed unchanged to me over any number of years that I can remember.

No, the establishment is in its Georgian-architecture squirehouses, the little fellows tending the store, and the Negro in his place, hanging seemingly vacantly around the stores but watching too. Only the seasons seem to change; yet the clouds of change are there and are bothersome. To those who would wish it away, the storm does not appear imminent. These feel relatively secure behind their sheriff patrols and barricades of style and custom. Yet there is a quarrelsome restlessness apparent among the secure ones, an inability to talk long without speaking of race.

Late in the afternoon, in trying to locate the school principal of the predominantly Negro community of Pine Gully,* I had the opportunity of looking through the windows of several padlocked buildings which are called schools, but which more fittingly should be called prison houses for the very young. At this point, I shall leave a fuller description of these barren detention places—places without visible amenities for living or learning—to the judgment of the NEA Investigation Committee. One cannot help wondering, however, at the horror of boredom and frustrated purpose that such buildings engender in pupils and teachers alike.

Pine Gully itself is a Negro community of 200 or 300 families, as large at least as the white community, Pine Hill. Pine Hill appears on a local map; Pine Gully does not.

I spoke with only three people in Pine Gully, two of whom are related to the obviously inferior Negro "academy" (Negro high school). *Academy* is a euphemism applied to Negro high schools originally designed by the whites to make Negroes think they were getting halls of higher learning for their children rather than cesspools of educational despair. The cynical term is in the same category of white regard as the term *professor* applied to a lowly school principal. All repeatedly emphasized the "sorry," tragic plight of the segregated, Negro schools. One man spoke at some length about the insignificant political position of the Negro in the local power structure. The other informants underscored what he had to say. This man was calculatedly "reserved" with me in the early moments of our interview, but warmed up to considerable militancy later.

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* Pseudonym

Strangely enough, I saw this informant, even if a very minor figure, as a part of the existing power structure of Wilcox County. While he still is effectively barred from the upper reaches of the existing power structure, he is a part of the active, "in the wings" opposition that it wishes to placate and buy off. He is a man who, with a few votes, could be a real figure in the elective power apparatus of the County. He is not there yet, but he has a modicum of recognition and he is striving for more. He has learned to survive, and he is on the move. The ratio of power, however, in the Negro's case in point is still 4,000 acres to 40. He owns approximately 40 acres of land and his house. He is an administrative employee at the high school—a position that is a slight nod of recognition by the general power structure to a Negro they feel that they can or must trust. To him, there has been some progress. He says as much.

Yet this man, too, is caught in ambivalence. He refuses to be too critical of the establishment, because he, too, owns land. He is "officially" connected with those who educate the young. He says, however, "In case of trouble, if they come after me, they'll have to come on my land, and I've got guns in my house and a light out front. I can see them, and they can't see me. Or if I have to run to my car, to get out the back way, I got guns in it, too, and bullets aplenty."

The informant finally summed up the power position of his race in this way:

"I asked the sheriff, 'How come you let the white folks get by with making all kinds of traffic violations while you catch the Negro for even thinking about making a traffic mistake?' The officer replied, 'When you niggers pay my salary and can hire and fire me, I'll start treating you just like everybody else, and not before!' "

Political Solutions to Problems Still Waiting

In power and property terms, the Negroes of Wilcox have a long way to go.

They have tried most recently to put up candidates for office. White watchers have very politely asked those who have gone to the polls, "Let me help you vote?" and thereupon have marked the ballots of literate voters and illiterate alike. Two of the Negro voters said that in spite of this obstacle, they would keep trying.

"They won't sell me any land on this highway to put up a store," said the man with the well-lit yard. "I got the money, but they won't sell."

"I'm going to run for County Commissioner and try to rearrange all that. I'm going to do just that," he vowed emphatically.

One wonders, however, whether the guns being hoarded by each side in the struggle now joined will have to be used to break the rigid barrier of class, power, and privilege that torments Wilcox County—and our nation.

The public schools are, of course, instruments of power in any system. They are a part of any given power structure. Their function is related to socialization of the young through restatements of institutional values. Dominant institutional values in our society generally, and in Wilcox County specifically, are values related to the economy in which the Negro is effectively barred from the ownership structure. The squirearchy is determined to keep it that way and insists that the schools reflect physically and psychologically this policy stance.

This position is being challenged by the County's black majority, which in its struggle has called for help upon the NEA. The struggle is political in the finest sense of that term.

By its resolute refusal to solve its local social, economic, and educational problems, Wilcox County becomes a corrupt feeder-source of all the urban problems of the body-politic of the nation. It spews out its untrained, dissatisfied young into the sluggish, backwash ghettoes of America's cities.

A solution of the school problems of this benighted community awaits a solution of the land problem of the whole South and of the nation. Whether all of the Negro citizens of Wilcox County are as articulately aware of the roots of this problem as the Negro man with whom I spoke at length, I cannot say.

Solutions to school finance problems await political decisions that can only be made by *all* the people of Wilcox County, a large proportion of whom are still effectively barred from direct participation in the formal and informal processes of power.

The recognition that corporate taxes, hooked into the national GNP (gross national product) must replace the dependence on land taxes in the rural areas and that "bringing in industry" does not of itself bring in solutions to local problems is an idea that, as yet, does not seem to have occurred to the people of Wilcox County, whether they be of the establishment or of the disfranchised.

This, then, is a partial and tentative background of the general system of power against which the NEA Investigation Committee may project the considerations of educational policy problems of Wilcox County, Alabama.

[1] Richardson, Jesse M., editor. *Alabama Encyclopedia*. UPI. Northport, Ala.: American Southern Publishing Co., 1965. p. 353.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 339.

[3] Southern Progress Committee, Alabama State Republican Committee. "Southern Progress." *Alabama Almanac of 1965*. 1965.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Industrial Alabama: A Directory of Manufacturers*. Montgomery, Ala.: Alabama Chamber of Commerce, 1965. p. 33.

[6] "Alabama County Statistical Abstracts." Bureau of Business Research, University of Alabama, 1964. p. 299.

[7] Rubin, Morton. *Plantation County*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951. (Note: One of the first persons interviewed in the county mentioned Dr. Rubin's work and indicated, as I already was aware, that "plantation county" is in reality Wilcox County.)

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 110-11, 124-25.

[9] "Industrial Alabama: A Directory of Manufacturers." Montgomery, Ala.: Alabama Chamber of Commerce, 1965.

Notes

[1] "Fired Negro Teachers Get NEA Compensation." *Alabama Journal*, January 4, 1966.

[2] United States Commission on Civil Rights. *Voting*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1961. p. 5.

[3] Southern Education Reporting Service. "School Desegregation in the Southern and Border States." *Alabama Highlights*, March 1967. p. 8.

[4] Ulrey, Orion. *Projects for Development of People and Communities in Wilcox County and Southern Alabama*. East Lansing: Michigan State University, Department of Agricultural Economics, October 1966. p. 6.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] U.S. Bureau of the Census. *City and County Data Book*. 1962.

[9] Ulrey, Orion, *op, cit.*, p. 9.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 7, 9.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[12] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *op. cit.*

[13] *New Structures Versus Old Problems*. Southern Christian Leadership Conference Report. 1966.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Negro Population, by County, 1960 and 1950*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, March 1966.

[16] Chamber of Commerce of the United States. *The Disadvantaged Poor: Education and Employment*. Task Force on Economic Growth and Opportunity. Washington, D.C.: the Chamber, 1966.

[17] From *Appendices to Plaintiff's Trial Brief* in Civil Action 3934-65, United States vs. Wilcox County Board of Education, Superintendent of Education for Wilcox County, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Board of Education of the State of Alabama.

[18] *United States v. Wilcox County Board of Education*. Civil Action No. 3934-65; U.S. District Court for Southern District of Alabama.

[19] *Plaintiff's Trial Brief.*

[20] *Appendices to Plaintiff's Trial Brief.*

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] *Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. 24.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[28] From *Appendices to Plaintiff's Trial Brief* in *United States v. Wilcox County Board of Education*, et al. Civil Action 3934-65. U.S. District Court, Southern District of Alabama, Northern Division. 1966. p. C-14.

[29] *Ibid.* p. C-15.

[30] *Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. pp. 20, 21.

[31] *Appendices to Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. C-12.

[32] *Appendices to Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. A-13.

[33] *Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. 18.

[34] *Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. 19.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[37] *Appendices to Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. C-30.

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[38] *Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. 32a.

[39] *Appendices to Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. A-13.

[40] *Appendices to Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. C-13.

[41] *Appendices to Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. pp. A-11, 15.

[42] *Appendices to Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. B-7.

[43] *Appendices to Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. B-3.

[44] *Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. 50.

[45] *Appendices to Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. B-6.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. C-29.

[47] *Plaintiff's Trial Brief*. p. 15.

[48] Alabama Education Association. *Focus on School Finance*. Montgomery, Ala.: the Association, 1966.

[49] Alabama Education Association, *op. cit.*

[50] National Education Association, Research Division. *Rankings of the States*. Washing, D.C.: the Association, 1964. p. 37.

[51] Division of Surveys and Field Services, Center for Southern Education Studies, George Peabody College. *High Schools in the South*. Nashville, 1966. In addition to its own survey findings, the Peabody report cites the results of leading educational researchers concerning minimum, optimum, and maximum recommended school sizes.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

[53] Conant, James B. *The American High School Today*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1959. p. 77.

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] Peabody College, *op cit.*

[56] Ulrey, *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 12.

[57] Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. *Intergovernmental Relations in the Poverty Program*. Washington, D.C.: the Commission, April 1966. p. 271.

[58] Patterson, Jack. "Business Response to the Negro Movement." *New South* (Southern Regional Council, Atlanta, Georgia). p. 74. Winter 1966.